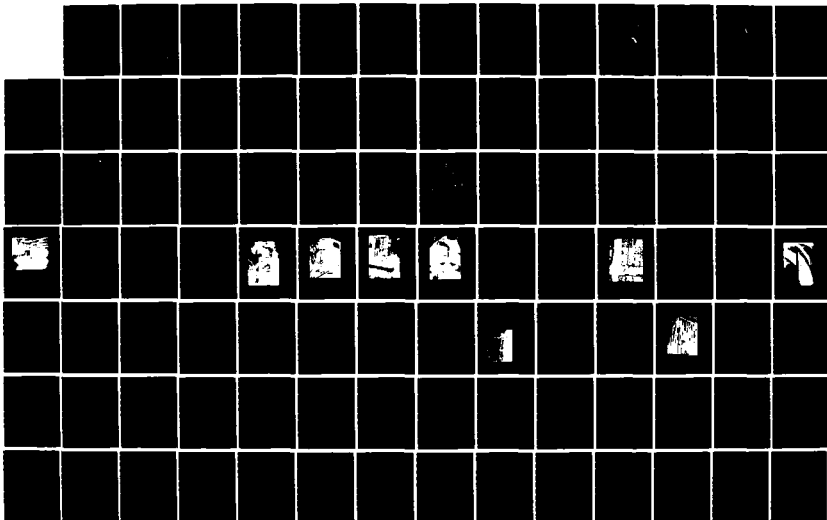


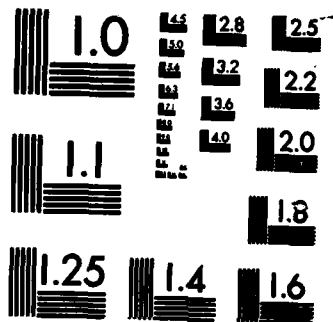
EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY OF THE
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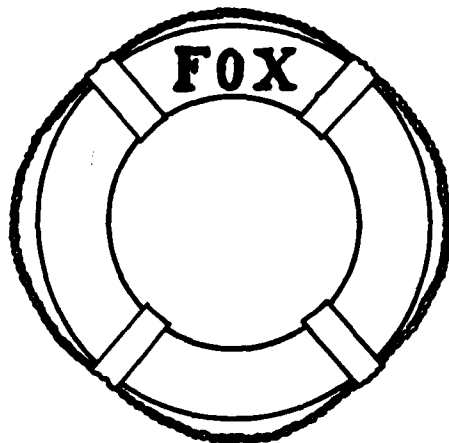
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**EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY
OF THE M/V FOX, AN HISTORIC BOAT IN LAFOURCHE PARISH,
LOUISIANA**

R. CHRISTOPHER GOODWIN AND ASSOCIATES, INC.
1306 BURDETTE STREET
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70118

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3 JULY 1984

FINAL REPORT

PREPARED FOR:
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT,
CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. Box 60267
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(20 cont.)

>nomination to and inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.
Recommendations concerning mitigation alternatives were made.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES.....	2
LIST OF TABLES.....	4
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
2. RESEARCH DESIGN.....	11
3. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING.....	18
4. HISTORICAL SETTING.....	20
Colonial Period.....	20
Transition Between Colonial and American Period.....	22
American Period.....	22
Later Period.....	26
5. WATER TRANSPORTATION, SETTLEMENT, AND COMMERCE ON HISTORIC BAYOU LAFOURCHE.....	33
6. GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY OF M/V FOX.....	40
7. CONSTRUCTION PHASES.....	49
8. ENGINEERING.....	56
9. M/V FOX AS A SAILING VESSEL.....	61
10. CONCLUSIONS.....	66
11. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	71
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	73
APPENDIX 1: Glossary of Technical Terms.....	76
APPENDIX 2: Transcripts of Oral Interviews..... (see Table 2)	81

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LIST OF FIGURES

1.	Map of Louisiana showing location of Lafourche Parish.....	6
2.	Plan of Lafourche Parish showing location of Larose at the intersection of Bayou Lafourche and the Intra-coastal canal.....	7
3.	USGS 7.5 minute Larose quadrangle excerpt, showing the location of M/V Fox.....	8
4.	Plan of the project vicinity, showing location of the M/V Fox, the project right-of-way, and of the Aymar tract.....	9
5.	Map of Bayou Lafourche ca. 1916, showing railroads, canals, and major settlements. (Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers, New Orleans District, 1916:2447, Plate 13).....	25
6.	Annotated recent lineage chart of the Aymar family.....	29
7.	Aymar Land Company subdivision in Larose, redrawn from 1912 plan. (Map Index No. 485, Lafourche Parish Courthouse, Thibodaux, La.).....	31
8.	Nineteenth century keelboat. (Howard Tilton Memorial Library, Louisiana Collection, Vertical File, Mississippi River Boats, Tulane University, New Orleans).....	38
9.	Profile of the M/V Fox, showing the main cabin, aft cabin, lower mast, and carvel planking.....	41
10.	Deck Plan of the M/V Fox, showing bulkheads, benches, and windows.....	41
11.	M/V Fox beached on the bank of Bayou Lafourche at its home port of Larose, La.....	42
12.	Interior of M/V Fox's main cabin, showing bench locker and collapsed main cabin roof.....	43
13.	View of the stern section of M/V Fox, showing aft deck, aft cabin, and hull planking. The damage reportedly was caused by a runaway barge.....	44
14.	Closeup of M/V Fox's rudder assembly, showing rudder crosshead and rudderstock.....	45

15.	1948 air photo of the Larose area, showing the location of M/V Fox.....	48
16.	Closeup of M/V Fox's framing showing old ribs still in place next to new ribs and floor timbers.....	51
17.	Detail of M/V Fox framing. (a) floor timber; (b) old frame (rib); (c) carvel hull planking; (d) new frame (rib); (e) keelson and keel.....	52
18.	Perspective view of sliding windows in aft cabin of M/V Fox with cutaway view of window in down position.....	55
19.	Perspective view of M/V Fox steering station at the forward end of the main cabin, showing the throttle linkage guide tube and lower steering wheel mount.....	57
20.	1910 advertisement for Captain Alex Barker's steamboat and barge line, Lockport, La.....	60
21.	View looking north of M/V Fox's rigging storage shed, showing top mast sections and throated boom. Larose, La.....	63
22.	Scale drawing of boom and top mast sections, the throated boom, mid-mast and mast head fittings, outhaul, and topping lift block.....	64

LIST OF TABLES

1. Preliminary List of Questions Used During Informant Interviews.....12
2. Chronological List of Interviews on the History of the M/V Fox.....14
3. Changing Patterns of Black and White Settlement Along Bayou Lafourche in the Late Nineteenth Century (After Bowie 1935:21).....26

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The M/V Fox is an historic motorized sailing vessel located on the east bank of Bayou Lafourche at Larose in Lafourche Parish, Louisiana (Figures 1, 2, and 3). The vessel is beached on the bank of the bayou within the right-of-way of the Larose Floodgate of the Larose to Golden Meadow hurricane protection project (Figure 4). A cultural resources survey of the Larose Floodgate was performed in April, 1983, by Michael E. Stout and John Muller, archeologists with the Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District. A report summarizing the results of that survey effort (Stout and Muller 1983) concluded that further research was necessary to determine the historical significance of the Fox, pursuant to PL 89-665 as amended, to EO 11573 (1971), and to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulation 36 CFR 800.

During March and April, 1984, R. Christopher Goodwin and Associates, Inc., performed investigations of the M/V Fox, in order to evaluate its significance and potential eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. The research design for this study and its concomitant methodologies focused on the establishment of an historic context for the vessel; on the elucidation of themes significant in Louisiana history that were illustrated by the vessel; and, on a program of recordation and description of the vessel. Archival and historic source research; oral history; and, fieldwork comprising photographic recordation, the preparation of line drawings, and detailed inspection of the vessel were undertaken pursuant to the research design.

Archival and historical research focused on the development of a chronological and developmental context for the vessel as an artifact of historic processes that delimited the nature of the vessel, its use modalities, and its relationship to a range of persons, places, events, and lifeways during its period of use. Oral informant interviews were utilized to provide specific information on the vessel's history, on comparable vessels of the period, and on its local status both during and after the period of its use. Field examination of the vessel provided morphological data on specific aspects of its structure, construction history, engineering, and modes of use.

The following sections of this report summarize the results of this multidisciplinary research effort. After discussion of the research design and of methodologies applied towards its fulfillment, the environmental setting of the historic property is synopsized. The historic setting of the Fox locale is elaborated chronologically from the Colonial period to the twentieth century, employing a telescoping scale of specificity. Important historic themes identified in the Louisiana Comprehensive Archeological Plan (Smith et al., 1983) that have relevance to the Fox as a

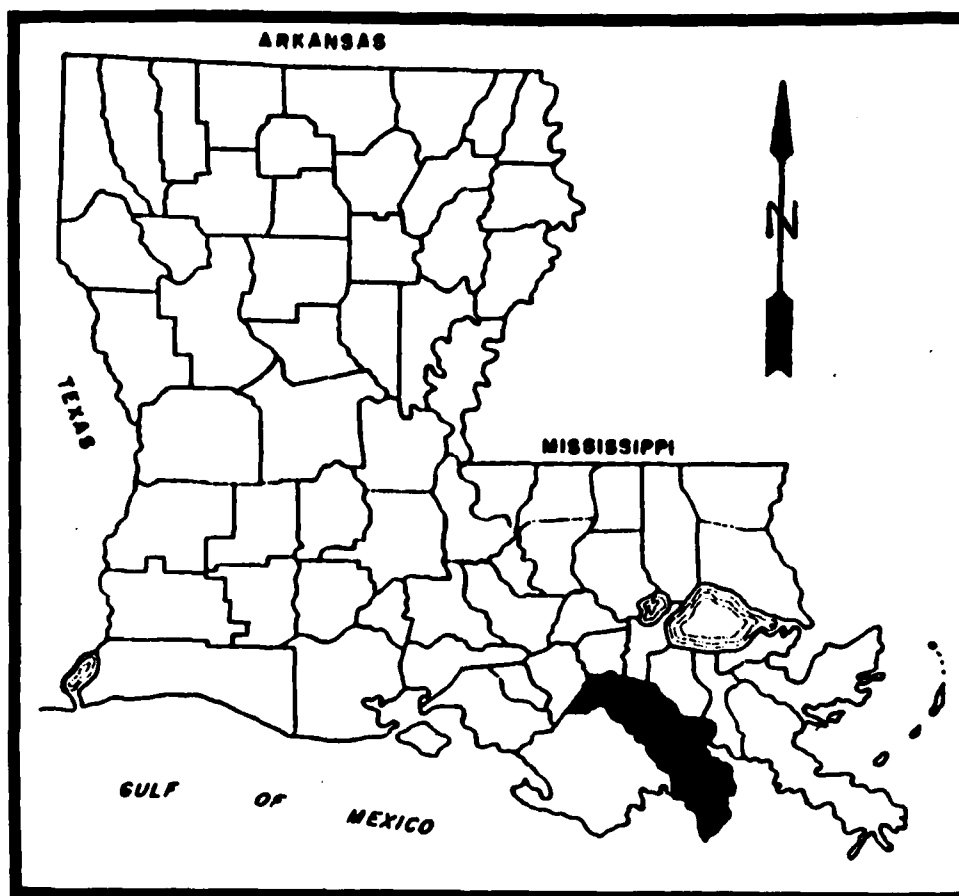


Figure 1. Map of Louisiana showing location of Lafourche Parish.

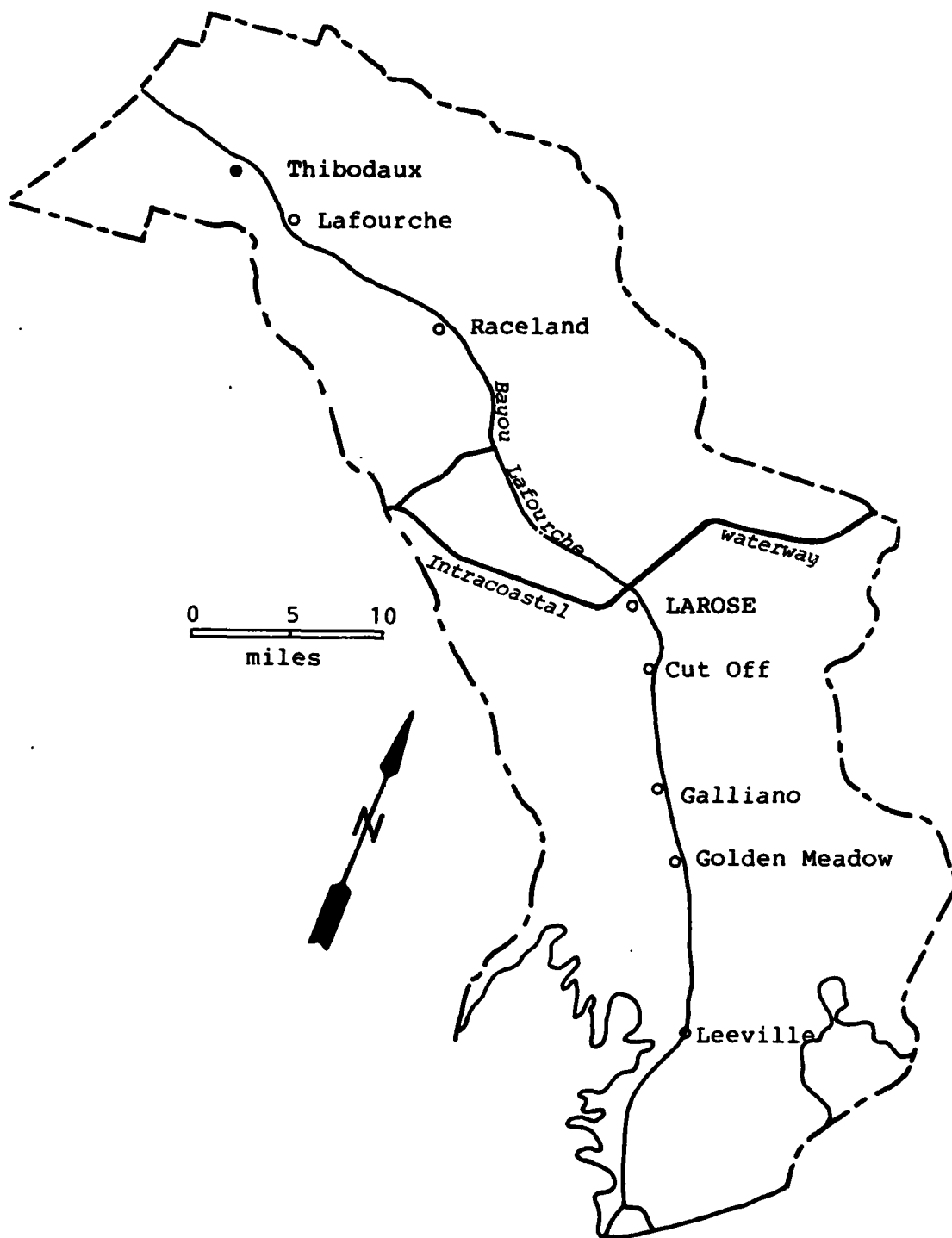


Figure 2. Plan of Lafourche Parish showing location of Larose at the intersection of Bayou Lafourche and the Intracoastal Canal.

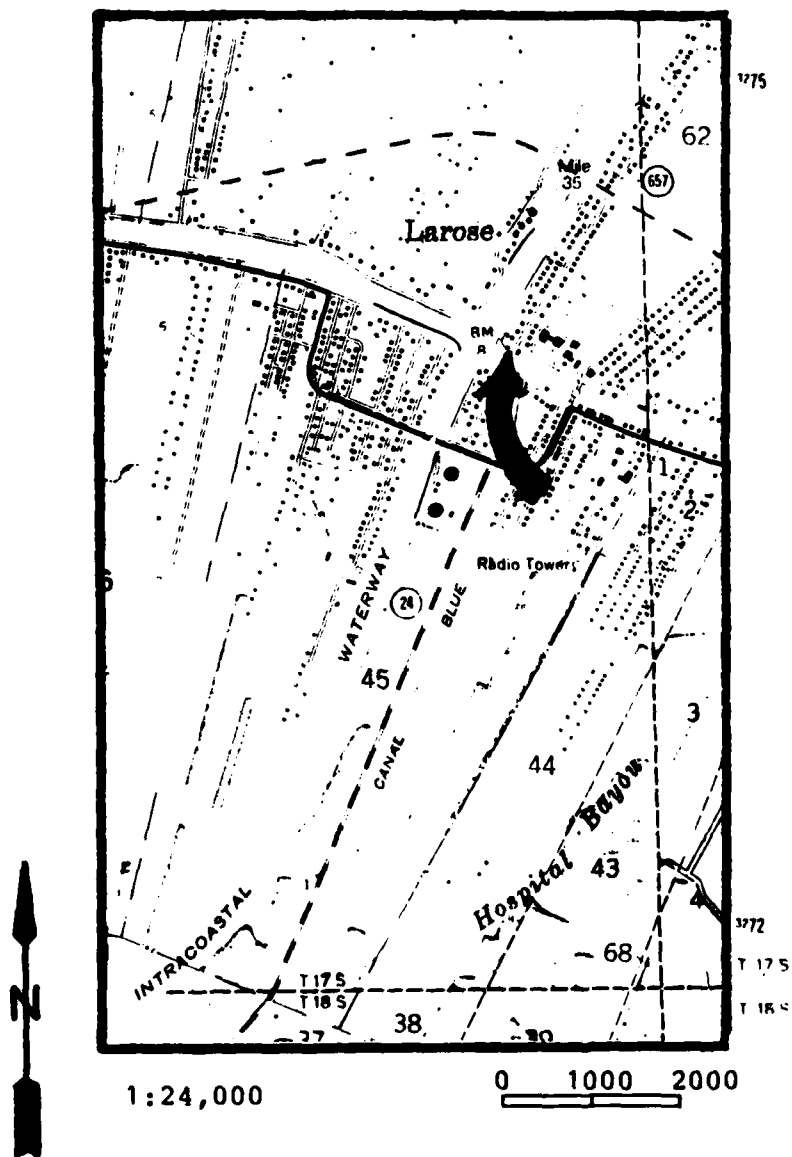


Figure 3. USGS 7.5 minute Larose quadrangle excerpt, showing the location of M/V Fox.

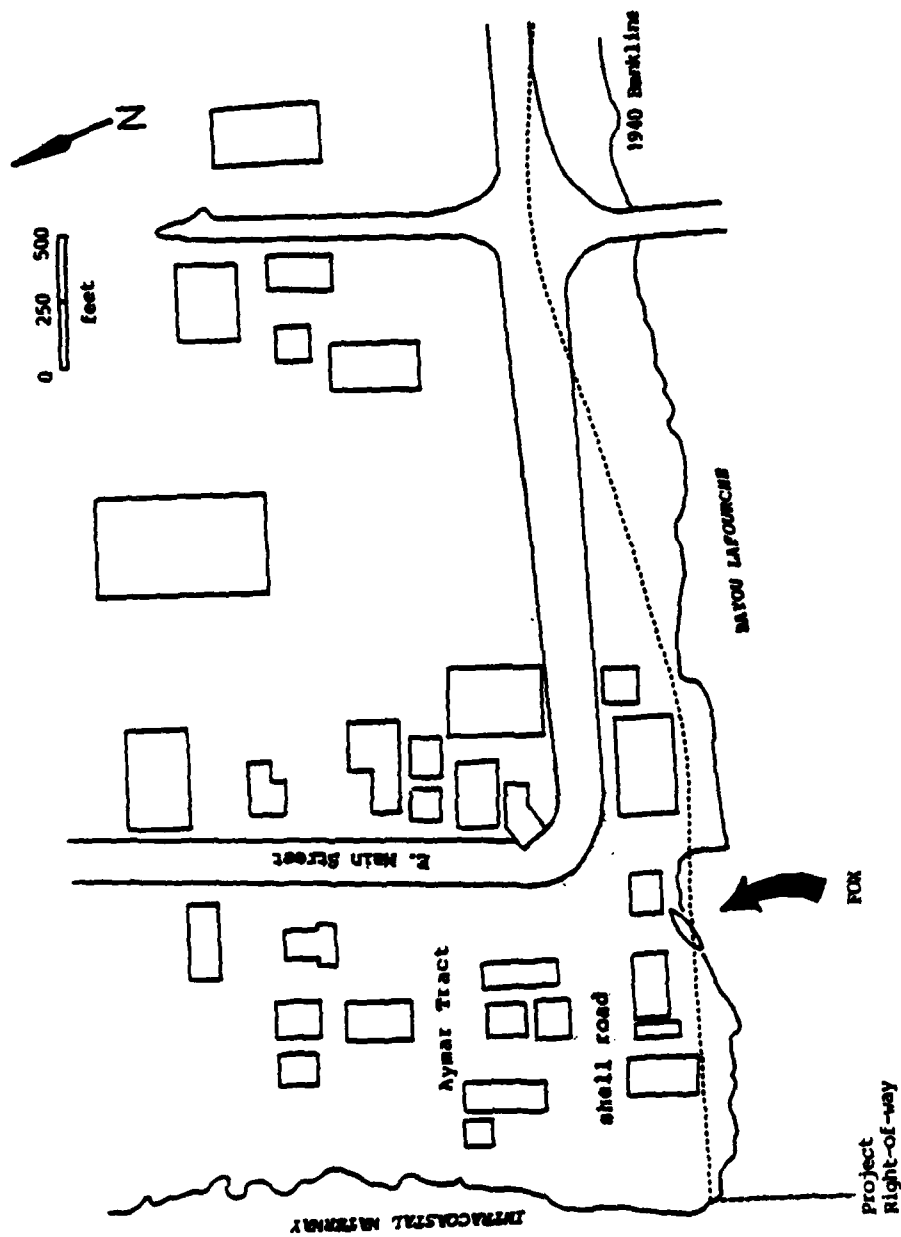


Figure 4. Plan of the project vicinity, showing location of the M/V Fox, the project right-of-way, and of the Aymar tract.

historic property are developed subsequently, with special attention to the nature and sequence of water transportation, settlement, and commerce in the area. Following a descriptive overview of the Fox and of its condition and history, detailed descriptions and interpretations of the vessel's construction history, engineering, and means of propulsion are presented, especially insofar as they pertain to the themes previously identified. Finally, conclusions about the historic significance of the vessel are presented, and recommendations are made pertaining to the need for mitigation activities. A glossary of technical terms is appended to this report, as is a set of transcriptions of taped informant interviews that have applicability not only to the Fox but also to the history of the lower Bayou Lafourche area.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH DESIGN

The fundamental goal of the research design for this study of the M/V Fox was the acquisition and critical evaluation of sufficient historical and structural information pertaining to the vessel and to its locale to permit assessment of its significance. The research design outlined three related objectives. First, archival research was intended to provide an historical context for the vessel and to delineate important historical themes that would serve as a framework for interpretation of the vessel as an exemplar of significant historical trends and processes. Second, oral history was designed to provide specific data on the vessel's use, history, and local significance. Third, fieldwork was undertaken to provide documentation of the formal characteristics of the vessel, its present condition, and its integrity.

Because of the nature of the historic property under investigation, it was anticipated that archival research would provide contextual and ancillary information, rather than a documentary record of the vessel. This expectation was borne out during research. For this reason, oral history also was emphasized as a programmatic device for a second state of archival research after contextual and thematic interests had been treated. In this manner, specific conveyances, notarial acts, successions, and maps were targeted for review.

Oral history and informant interviews were undertaken using a set of prepared research questions that continually were modified during the interview process. Informants for the oral history component of this study were identified using criteria of age, length of residence in Larose, and familiarity with the vessel and with its owners. Selection of informants was accomplished with the aid of Capt. Earl Cantrelle, a fifty-three year old lifelong and well-respected resident of Larose. Capt. Cantrelle was able to introduce the interviewers to eyewitnesses to the operation and even modification of the vessel; to an eighty year old former passenger on the Fox; and, to two sexagenarian brothers who excavated the bank of Bayou Lafourche so that the Fox could be beached. In addition, the present owner of the Fox provided substantial information during two staggered and lengthy interviews.

Whenever appropriate, informant interviews were taped using microcassettes, and pertinent sections of those interviews then were transcribed. Several interviews were of sufficient historical interest to warrant their complete transcription. These transcripts then were utilized in the synthesis of data pertaining to the Fox and to its historic setting. Transcripts of taped interviews are appended to this report (Appendix 2). The preliminary questions used during interview are enumerated in

Table 1. Baseline demographic data and familial and residential data also were collected during interview. In several instances, data from the various informants were contradictory or could not be intersubjectively verified. Thus, interview data was applied critically, and in all cases attempt was made to verify key points either in the archival record or through subsequent or follow up interviews.

TABLE 1. Preliminary List of Questions Used During Informant Interviews.

-
1. When was the boat abandoned?
 2. For what reasons was the boat abandoned?
 3. What route did the vessel take?
 4. At what points did it stop?
 5. Was it primarily a passenger boat?
 6. Did it also carry commercial goods, mail, etc.?
 7. Who operated the boat?
 8. Who owned the boat?
 9. When was it built?
 10. By whom was it built?
 11. Was it ever damaged by storm, etc.?
 12. What repairs were made to the boat as a result of any damage?
 13. Were any design modifications made to the boat during its use period in the interest of modernization?
 14. Were there any design elements of the boat that were particularly unusual?
 15. Is the boat connected with any local legends or events in local history?
 16. Are there any other boats that served similar functions on Bayou Lafourche?
 17. When were these operated?
 18. Who owned and operated these other boats?
 19. How were their designs similar or different from the Fox?
 20. Did any boat replace the Fox's services after the Fox was beached?
 21. What other boats, of any function, operated on Bayou Lafourche at the time the Fox did?
 22. What were the routes of these boats?
 23. How were these other boats designed?
 24. Who owned and operated these boats?
 25. Are there any boats that were contemporary with the Fox that still survive, either still in use or that are abandoned?
-

Because of the relative dearth of archival data on several singular aspects of vessel morphology and classification, telephone interviews also were conducted with professional maritime historians at a variety of institutions. Telephone interviews also were conducted with archivists at Tulane University, in order to try to elucidate the educational

background of the Fox's deceased owner, Ormand Aymar. All oral history and problem specific interviews conducted during this project are shown in Table 2.

Finally, fieldwork consisted of detailed physical inspection and recordation of the vessel. In many cases, data obtained during informant interviews was verified visually during examination of the Fox. Similarly, a number of structural details and anomalies that were observed during fieldwork were corroborated during subsequent interviews. These various data sets ultimately were integrated into the corpus of information presented here.

TABLE 2. Chronological list of Interviews on the History of the M/V Fox.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Residence/Affiliation</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>Taped</u>
Tom Butler Ron Simeral H. Rochelle	3/12/84	Nicholls State University Center for Louisiana Boatbuilding, Thibodaux, LA	Vessel types on Bayou Lafourche	No
Mike Simms	3/13/84	Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries, Motor Boat Division Registration Office, Baton Rouge, LA	M/V Fox registration	No
Mrs. Turner	3/13/84	U.S. Coast Guard, Marine Inspection Service, Records, New Orleans, LA	M/V Fox registration	No
Capt. Earl Cantrelle	3/14/84	Larose, LA	M/V Fox; comparable vessels on Bayou Lafourche	Yes
Mr. Irvin Tomplait	3/15/84	Larose, LA	M/V Fox	No
Wilkerson Guidry	3/15/84	Larose, LA	M/V Fox; vessel types on Bayou Lafourche	Yes
Harold Aymar	3/15/84	Larose, LA	M/V Fox; Ormand Aymar; Harang (Harvey No. 2) Canal	Yes
Capt. Wilo Rodrigue	3/16/84	Larose, LA	M/V Fox	No

TABLE 2. Continued.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Residence/Affiliation</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>Taped</u>
Tony Ougel	3/16/84	Larose, LA	M/V Fox; Ormand Aymar	Yes
William Oberhelmann	3/20/84	New Orleans, LA	Bayou St. John; shipbuilding; Old Basin Canal	Yes
Capt. Earl Cantrelle	3/21/84	Larose, LA	M/V Fox; comparable vessels; history of Larose	No
Capt Earl Cantrelle Wilkerson Guldry	3/21/84	Larose, LA	M/V Fox; comparable vessels on Bayou Lafourche	Yes
Louis Cheramie	3/21/84	Larose, LA	M/V Fox; Ormand Aymar; history of Larose	Yes
Wilcliff Guirdy Louis Cheramie	3/21/84	Larose, LA	M/V Fox; comparable vessels; history of Larose; Ormand Aymar	Yes
Pamela Arceneaux	3/21/84	Historic New Orleans Collection	Boatbuilding; vessel types; Bayou Lafourche	No
Paula Primm	3/21/84	Louisiana Maritime Museum, New Orleans, LA	Vessel types; Bayonne style	No

TABLE 2. Continued.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Residence/Affiliation</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>Taped</u>
Dr. Fred Kniffen	3/21/84	Dept. of Geography and Anthropology, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA	Bayonne style vessels	No
Harold Aymar	3/22/84	Larose, LA	M/V Fox; Ormand Aymar	Yes
Celina Nicholls Graham	3/28/84	Larose, LA	M/V Fox; Aymar family history	No
Jim Knowles	3/28/84	Division of Transportation Smithsonian Institution Washington, D.C.	Bayonne style vessels	No
Tom Emerson	3/29/84	Historic New Orleans Collection	Greenwood Cemetery	No
(Office Personnel)	3/29/84	Greenwood Cemetery, New Orleans, LA	Ormand Aymar	No
John Sands	3/30/84	Mariners Museum, Newport News, VA	Bayonne style vessels	No
Shelly Richardson	4/2/84	Office of the Dean, School of Engineering, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA	Ormand Aymar	No
Peter Stanford	4/2/84	National Marine Historical Society	Bayonne style vessels	No

TABLE 2. Continued.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Residence/Affiliation</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>Taped</u>
Delores Francois	4/2/84	Alumni Records, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA	Ormand Aymar	No
Norman Brouwer	4/2/84	South Street Seaport Museum, New York, NY	Bayonne style vessels	No
Leonard Connett	4/3/84	New Orleans, LA	Fox and Regal engines	Yes
Felix de Boisblanc	4/3/84	New Orleans, LA	Fox and Regal engines	Yes
Mr. Dupont	4/4/84	Halter Marine, Lockport, LA	Barker Barge Lines	No
Ollie Drewitz	4/4/84	Mechanical Equipment Co., New Orleans, LA	Fox and Regal engines	No
Roy Grow	4/4/84	Reagan Equipment Co., Harvey, LA	Fox and Regal engines	No

CHAPTER 3

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The M/V Fox is situated on the east bank of Bayou Lafourche, below the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, in Larose, Lafourche Parish, Louisiana (Figure 3). The physiography of the Bayou Lafourche area is principally deltaic, and exhibits a characteristic distributary stream pattern. The natural levees of Bayou Lafourche are highest and widest at its confluence with the Mississippi River near Donaldsonville, and subside and narrow considerably near Larose. Between Bayou Lafourche and New Orleans, a distance of about thirty miles, back slopes of the natural levees merge into basins containing backswamps or lakes. Marshlands predominate closer to the coast. Bayou Lafourche is located within the Lafourche Delta Complex, one of the distributary networks of the Mississippi River which was active from about 3500 years B.P. until 1904, when a dam was built across its mouth at the Mississippi River at Donaldsonville. Bayou Lafourche is 107 miles long. At Larose, the site of M/V Fox, Bayou Lafourche today is about 600' wide and approximately seven feet deep.

The natural levees of Bayou Lafourche attain three miles in width near the Mississippi River, and reach elevations of twenty to twenty-five feet above mean sea level near Donaldsonville. They decline in elevation and width nearer the seaward margin (Saucier 1974). In the marsh and swamp areas along the lower reaches of the bayou, elevations range from two feet above mean sea level to sea level. Soils in the area of the natural levees are typical river deposited clays and silts. The backswamps that occupy the lowest parts of the floodplain contain floodwater-deposited clays and silts. Marshes overlay areas of soft clays intermixed with peat and other organic materials. Salinity in these marshes ranges from fresh to brackish to salty.

Vegetation covaries with elevation within the study area. Natural levee crests are driest, and prior to historic settlement they supported dense forests of hardwoods composed of live oaks, cherrybark oaks, wateroak, redgum, American elm, winged elm, pecan, persimmon, and honeylocust. Palmettos were a distinctive undergrowth plant. However, natural levees along the bayou were cleared historically for agricultural development and for residential and commercial uses. Today, scattered stands of live oaks along the levees represent the last vestiges of natural overstory vegetation.

Backswamps located in the basins behind and between levee systems usually contain stands of fresh water during most or part of the year. Some areas are never free of standing water except during periods of drought. Characteristic backswamp trees are cypress and tupelogum, which were heavily depleted during the period of industrial cypress lumbering (1890-1930). Other

species found are swamp blackgum, water ash, virginia willow, and buttonbush. Marsh vegetation consists of grasses, sedges, and rushes, varying with water depth and salinity.

Economically important animal species are found primarily in the wetland habitats of the backswamps, marshes, and open waterways. White and brown shrimp, blue crabs, and oysters are exploited commercially on a seasonal basis. Commercial freshwater fishing is based primarily on catfish. Nutria, muskrat, otters, mink, and raccoon are trapped seasonally by the settlers on lower Bayou Lafourche. Recreational hunting brings in rabbits, deer, squirrel, and the migratory waterfowl that frequent the Mississippi flyway. The American alligator is found in the backswamps; a short annual hunting season on alligators opens during September.

During the 1930s, oil exploration began in south Lafourche Parish around Leeville. In 1978, a total of 979 producing wells were located in the parish. Salt domes located in the area produce sulphur, and today also function as oil storage facilities. Oil industry support services are plentiful in South Lafourche, and a network of pipelines through the parish connects the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port (LOOP) to storage and refinery sites elsewhere in the state. Although the economy of the area is primarily agricultural, many water-based industries have developed south of Lockport. Fishing, shrimping, boat-building, transportation, and barge loading are the primary industries.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORIC SETTING

Colonial Period

Earliest references to Bayou Lafourche date from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century exploration of the Mississippi River by French explorers. Jean Baptiste le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, and Pierre le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, made references to Bayou Lafourche as "le fourche des Chitimachas," the fork of the Chitimacha Indians, which was located near the present day location of Donaldsonville.

The first historic settlement of Bayou Lafourche occurred on the upper stretch of the bayou near the Mississippi River. Broad natural levees, fertile ground, and access to the bayou and to the Mississippi River for transportation, established a settlement pattern that has persisted until today.

In an effort to promote colonization in the French colonies of the New World, John Law, a Scottish entrepreneur, organized the Company of the West which was given proprietorship of the Louisiana colony by the French Government in 1717 (Davis 1971:52-53). In 1719, all French trading and colonizing companies were merged into the Company of the Indies. In order to attract colonists, large grants of land, or concessions, were given to wealthy or prominent colonists. Smaller grants, or habitations, were given to the less wealthy. In addition, the Company of the Indies reimbursed travel expenses to colonists of a variety of nationalities other than French. Thirty arpents of land, horses, oxen for field cultivation, pigs, sheep, chickens, household goods, and food supplies also were provided until the first harvest (Davis 1971:58). However, early attempts at colonization in Louisiana often resulted in failure. Colonists established themselves on small homesteads along the Mississippi near New Orleans, and later expanded upriver towards Baton Rouge. By 1731, Germans had begun to settle small farms on the upper portion of Bayou Lafourche (Knipmeyer 1956:24).

Early settlements and tracts were divided and measured using arpents; one arpent is equivalent to about 192 feet. Tracts of land usually had two to four arpents of frontage on the natural levee along waterways. Larger areas of twenty to forty arpents river frontage were granted for plantation holdings.

The population of French Colonial Louisiana increased only slightly during the first half of the 1700s. The colony still was not self sufficient in food production, although agricultural yields in cotton, tobacco, indigo, corn, rice, and vegetables increased. Industry and commerce were practically nonexistent. Military discipline was slack, settlements were subject to Indian raids, and France did little to promote development of the colony.

In November, 1762, at the end of the French and Indian War, France ceded the depressed Louisiana colony to Spain. In February, 1763, Great Britain acquired East and West Florida from Spain, as well as lands north of New Orleans and east of the Mississippi River from France (Davis 1971: 70,97).

The arrival of the Spanish Governor, Don Alejandro O'Reilly, initiated a new period of development and settlement in the Louisiana territory. Agricultural production increased, and specialized products such as indigo and tobacco, flax, hemp, and later sugar cane, were grown on plantations. Small farmers, or petit habitants, produced corn, wheat, barley, rice, beans, vegetables, and livestock.

By the 1790s, American flatboats from northern waterways began to arrive in Louisiana in increasing numbers. Foreign and domestic trade expanded rapidly. By 1802, imported goods included steel, fish, coffee, nails, clothes, hardware and tools, tile, corks, cordage, soap, shoes, clothing, empty bottles, and food stuffs. One-third of all imports consisted of alcoholic beverages (Taylor 1976:30; Davis 1971:137).

Between 1763 and 1802, the population of Louisiana significantly increased due to immigration. The most numerous group of immigrants was the Acadians, descendants of French immigrants to Nova Scotia who fled their homes or were deported by the British when France ceded Nova Scotia to Great Britain. Their arrival in Louisiana in large numbers began during the mid 1760s. Initial settlement was in the Attakapas country, along Bayou Teche. By 1790, Acadians were located along the Mississippi River in Ascension and St. James parishes, and along the upper half of Bayou Lafourche. Canary Islanders settled at Valenzuela; French West Indian refugees settled throughout southeastern Louisiana; and, Americans also were attracted to Louisiana by the promise of arable land.

The Acadians along Bayou Lafourche were small farmers who settled in dispersed settlements comprising small clusters of houses along the bayous. These settlements were common in the basin between Bayou Lafourche and the Mississippi (Knipmeyer 1956:48; LATELCO 1980:15). Hunting, trapping, and fishing provided goods for trade, and supplemented the agricultural food supply.

Of the various nationalities that settled along Bayou Lafourche in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Acadians clearly were the most influential in this area of geographic isolation. By the 1850s, Spanish, Germans, and Italians all had been assimilated or acculturated. French was the lingua franca on the Bayou, and Acadian customs predominated.

The last years of the Colonial Period viewed continued development and settlement along Bayou Lafourche. Grants were made in the vicinity of Lockport, and settlers on lower Bayou Lafourche turned to exploiting swamp and marsh resources. Grand

Isle residents established plantations; Barataria settlements remained small and isolated, providing a perfect haven for smugglers. The swamplands were exploited for timber, especially the cypress and oak used in shipbuilding and in building construction. Timber was one of the most valuable trade commodities exploited from the Louisiana colony, and continued to be important for the next hundred and fifty years. Also during this period, the first canals were dug, widening and connecting existing waterways and improving access to New Orleans (Swanson 1975:136). Canals aided in drainage of swamplands and in the creation of more arable land for pasturage and for cultivation. By 1803, the area along Bayou Lafourche had a population of 2800 (Bowie 1935:20).

Transition Between Colonial and American Period

After the American Revolution, and the opening of with the western frontier, western settlers sought to sell their surplus goods on the world market. The Mississippi River was the primary, if not sole route to these markets, and New Orleans was the chief port for the transshipment of goods. The right to use the Mississippi and to deposit in New Orleans was granted to Americans by Spain in the Treaty of 1795; thereafter, river traffic increased. Spain had returned Louisiana to France in 1800 by the Treaty of San Ildefonso, but that transfer was not completed until 1803. In 1802, the port and lower river traffic were closed to Americans while France waited to negotiate a peace settlement with Great Britain. This action angered the western Americans, and stimulated American appreciation of the importance of the Mississippi River and of the port of New Orleans.

American Period

In 1803, with the sale by France of the Louisiana Territory to the United States, the land area of the United States almost doubled in size (Davis 1971:157-165). In 1804, William C. Claiborne was inaugurated Louisiana's first governor. A legislative council subsequently was appointed, and in its first meeting Louisiana was divided into twelve counties, each with a county judge, sheriff, coroner, clerk, and treasurer appointed by the governor. Lafourche was one of the original counties. In 1807, the territory was redivided into nineteen parishes, without abolishing the previous counties. Thibodaux, thirty-four miles north of Larose and which had served as a trading post between New Orleans and Bayou Teche, became the parish seat of Lafourche in 1808. Thibodaux was incorporated in 1830 as Thibodeauxville; the name was shortened to Thibodeaux in 1838, and the spelling changed to Thibodaux in the 1900s (LATELCO 1980:42). The term "parish" derived from the French and Spanish terms for ecclesiastical divisions under the charge of a curate (Davis 1971: 169). Louisiana was admitted to the Union as a state in 1812.

With the advent of statehood for Louisiana, settlement by Americans from all sections of the United States and particularly

from the south and west, accelerated. Some of these American immigrants to Louisiana established themselves as landowners on Bayou Lafourche, and planted cotton and sugar. Unlike the French planters who had established themselves on the river, the Americans on Bayou Lafourche established their plantations beyond the levee crests which were occupied by small French Acadian farms. On the upper half of Bayou Lafourche, a linear area of thirty-four miles, the natural levees were comparable in size to those of the Mississippi River; that is, they were about three miles wide. Between Thibodaux and Valentine, a twenty-eight mile section, the levees narrow considerably, reducing arable land. Three of the eight plantations in this latter area were established on the sites of former crevasses, which provided more fertile land. Below Valentine, plantations occurred on the banks of the bayou or on the levees of smaller bayous. Rehder (1971) has described the configuration of plantations along Bayou Lafourche, which reflect the nature of the earlier settlements of the petit habitants, as following the block and grid patterns characteristic of the Anglo-American Upland South and of the Tidewater South plantations (Rehder 1971:97-98).

Throughout the first half of the 1800s, sugar planting and production increased in southern Louisiana. However, the earlier introduced varieties of Creole and Otaheite cane were replaced by the Purple and Striped varieties, which, although more resistant to cold weather and insects, were not easily milled by animal-powered equipment. The introduction of steam-powered mills in 1825 overcame this problem (Rehder 1971:76). By the 1850s, cane juices began to be boiled in sealed vacuum-pans which allowed for better quality control and faster processing.

Although settlement in Lafourche Parish began during the mid eighteenth century, no large towns developed until 1830, the date of incorporation of Thibodaux. Thibodaux had been laid out in 1820, and by 1817 Bayou Lafourche had been settled for 90 miles along its banks (Bowie 1935:21). Settlements outside of Thibodaux remained widely scattered and consisted primarily of small farmsteads which produced corn, Irish potatoes, onions, peas, beans, and hay. Until the development of the cypress lumber industry during the 1890s, Lafourche remained predominantly agricultural between Donaldsonville and the present town of Larose. Industrial development was restricted to small sawmills, moss gins, a cotton gin, and a cigar factory (Bowie 1935:33).

By 1840, Thibodaux had a population of over 500 and housed the Union Bank of Louisiana, one of only eight discount and deposit houses in the state of Louisiana (LATELCO 1980:42). Merchants conducted a thriving business, and a large trade resulted during winter months when traders on boats exchanged goods for sugar and molasses. Ferries operated as transport along the bayou. The first Episcopal church built west of the Mississippi was established in Thibodaux in 1843; St. John's Church still stands today.

In 1852, the New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western Railroad crossed three miles below Thibodaux. Another small railroad crossed at Raceland, which, in the mid 1880s, served as little more than a depot for the Southern Railway and for the Bowie Lumber Company. Although the development of the railroad did influence trade and development, transportation and communication networks continued to focus on water transport along Bayou Lafourche. According to an 1886 report to the Chief of Engineers, freight transported by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company to New Orleans was gathered from the various plantations along the bayou by large flat boats (Appendix B, Report to the Chief of Engineers, 1886:1269).

Lockport, eleven miles north of Larose (Figure 5) developed after 1823, when William Fields, a native of Rhode Island, purchased substantial property in the area. Fields planted his lands on both sides of the bayou, and owned and managed a commercial barge line that transported sugar and molasses to the New Orleans market via Bayou Lafourche and the Mississippi River. Fields donated lands on both sides of Bayou Lafourche in the 1830s to the Barataria and Lafourche Land Company, for the development of a canal connecting the bayou to Lake Salvador. Construction of this Longueville Canal was completed in 1850, and a settlement with a school and a post office was established in 1875. Lockport takes its name from the canal locks located on the east bank. Lockport was incorporated in 1899 (LATELCO 1980:49, 53-55).

During the War Between the States, the railroads at Raceland and Thibodaux were important to the defense of New Orleans. In 1863, Lafourche Crossing below Thibodaux became the site of a two day battle between Union and Confederate troops. New Orleans had been captured in 1862, and Union forces were sent from Algiers to Donaldsonville in October, 1862. Union forces retained control of the Lafourche bayou country, and in the spring of 1863, the Confederates failed again in an attempt to retake Lafourche crossing, only to retreat to Boutte, below New Orleans (LATELCO 1980:48).

Bayou Lafourche was predominantly agricultural at this time, and agricultural production suffered as a result of the conflict. As in other areas of the south, the federal occupation of the state between 1863 and 1877 was a period of disorder. Racial troubles were one aspect of this disorder, as reflected in demographic data from this period. An 1850 census of Lafourche indicated a total population of 9,532, with Negroes outnumbering whites by 4,412. At the time of this census, only some 200 were free men of color. These figures change by 1880, when whites numbered 8,060 and Negroes 7,806. The decrease in black population appears to reflect the disintegration of organized plantation labor and the emigration of blacks to urban areas and to rural areas outside the parish. Conversely, the neighboring parishes of Assumption and Ascension both experienced significant increases in the Negro population, as shown in Table 3.

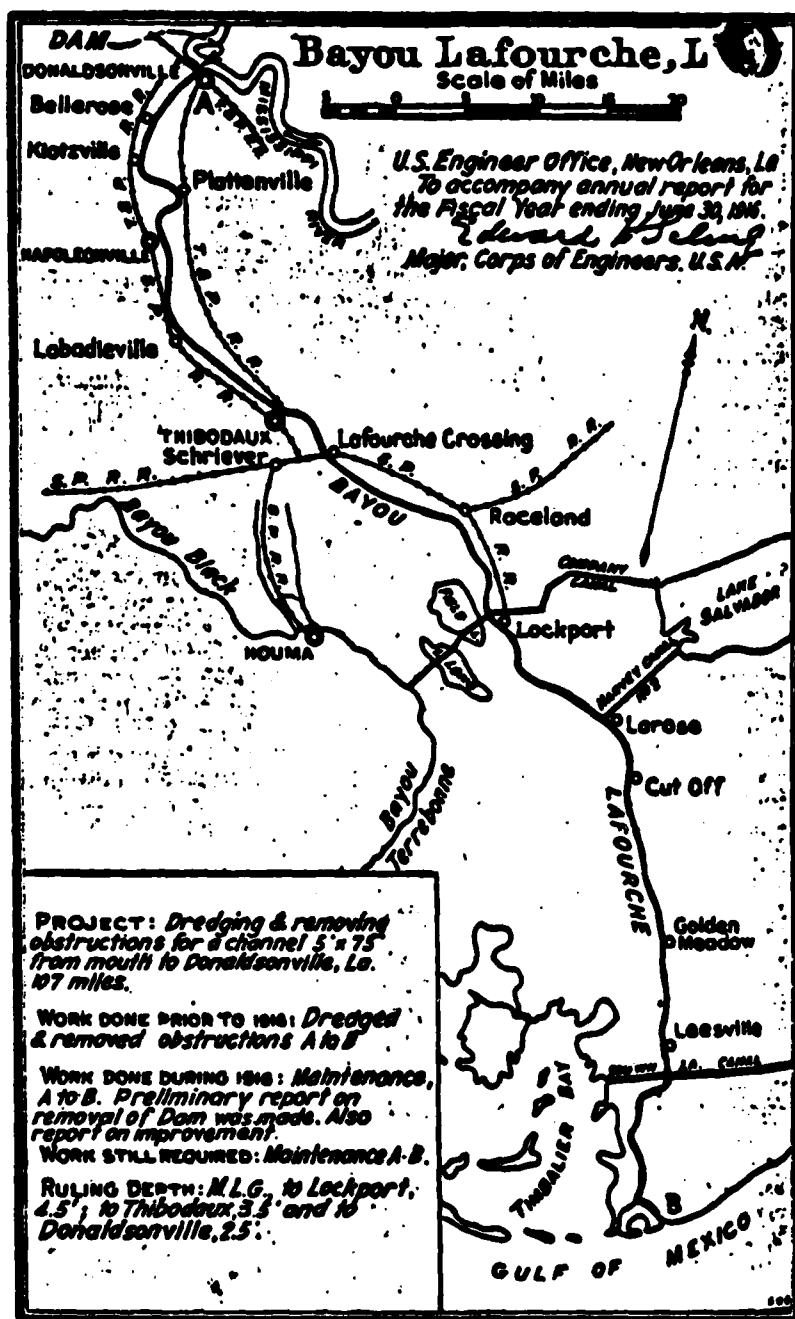


Figure 5. Map of Bayou Lafourche ca. 1916, showing railroads, canals, and major settlements. (Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers, New Orleans District, 1916:2447, Plate 13).

TABLE 3. Changing Patterns of Black and White Settlement Along Bayou Lafourche in the Late Nineteenth Century (After Bowie 1935:21).

	Ascension		Assumption		Lafourche	
<u>Year</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Negro</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Negro</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Negro</u>
1850	3,340	7,412	5,170	5,368	5,142	9,554
1870	4,265	7,310	6,247	6,984	8,060	6,659
1880	5,968	10,855	8,938	8,067	11,282	7,806

Later Period

Larose, approximately seventy miles south of Donaldsonville, has been considered a dividing point between upper and lower Lafourche. The natural levees decrease significantly in size at this point, and below Larose backswamps generally occur only one half mile behind the levee. Agriculture along lower Lafourche has remained primarily small scale, and the inhabitants have turned to fishing and to the swamps for their livelihood. Much of the arable land there is used for pasture (Bowie 1935:38-39).

The development of the Larose area began in 1846, when Octave Harang purchased land which he developed into a sugar plantation. To facilitate transport of sugar and molasses to New Orleans, shortly after this land purchase Harang constructed a small canal, little more than a ditch, that connected Bayou Lafourche and Lake Salvador. This canal entered Bayou Lafourche 67.75 miles below its head at Donaldsonville (Letter from the Secretary of War 1932:10). The canal had an active length of seven miles (Bank of Houma, 1910:65). The canal also was used by settlers on lower Bayou Lafourche to transport oranges, rice, and potatoes to New Orleans. In 1875, the Harang Canal was sold to Jules Leblanc.

During the nineteenth century, navigation on Bayou Lafourche was difficult at best. Historic records describe the Bayou as shallow at its head and occasionally dry during the summer and fall (Bowie 1935:25). Reports to the Chief of Engineers dealing with Bayou Lafourche between 1874 and 1932 noted the presence of snags and bars along the upper Bayou which necessitated clearing by private individuals and by the Corps of Engineers to permit navigation. For eight months out of the year, the bayou was navigable from Donaldsonville to Thibodaux. The large river steamboats which regularly traveled the bayou, the "Henry Tete" and the "Lizzie Hopkins," which had carrying capacities of 700 hogsheads of sugar or more, only could travel during high water. Flatboats and luggers could go the entire length of the bayou

during high water, and made daily trips between Lockport and Raceland. Semi-weekly trips were made between Raceland and Cut Off (Report to the Chief of Engineers 1874:766).

By 1886, the bayou had been improved somewhat and the number of trading vessels on the bayou increased. Commerce on the bayou, consisting mostly of sugar and molasses, was valued at three million dollars annually. The larger steamboats, such as the "Assumption," "Isabel," "E.W. Fuller," and "Alice LeBlanc," could navigate the bayou from December to August, making two trips per week to Thibodaux and sometimes as far south as Lockport. At no time could steamers pass through the Harang Canal or through the canal at Lockport. However, luggers often made trips to New Orleans carrying goods via these routes (Report to the Chief of Engineers 1886:1275). Increased volume of trade and clearance for navigation by the Corps of Engineers reflect denser settlement along the bayou during the late nineteenth century.

In 1908, the bayou was navigable its entire length by flatboats and log rafts. However, the damming of the bayou at its head increased siltation on the upper reaches of the bayou. Two small gasoline powered boats that travelled between New Orleans and Bayou Lafourche by way of Bayou Barataria and of the canals at Lockport and Larose replaced the steamer packets and passenger boats (Report to the Chief of Engineers 1908:428). On the basis of informant interviews (Appendix 2), it has been established that these two vessels probably were the Fox and a blunt sterned boat similar to the Fox owned by a Mr. Lefort. The presence of log rafts on the bayou reflects the development of the cypress industry and the growth of the sawmill town of Bowie across from Raceland. By 1914, fourteen registered gasboats and seventeen unregistered gasboats plied the Bayou Lafourche to New Orleans trade route (Report to the Chief of Engineers 1914:2268).

The community which became Larose developed around the intersection of the Harang Canal and Bayou Lafourche. By 1890, over fifty families had settled in the area around Holy Rosary Catholic Church, which was established in 1873. A small school was attended by the local children. In 1890, Dr. Willie Harang induced a pharmacist friend from New Orleans to move to the settlement. Joseph Felicien Larose established a small pharmacy there and obtained permission to open an official postal service shortly thereafter. Until 1896, when the Rural Free Delivery system began operation in the parish, mail was addressed to "Larose."

The Harang Canal was sold in 1897 to Ormand Aymar, who, along with his brother Wilton, operated the waterway at least until its purchase in 1909 by Joseph Harvey of the Harvey Canal, Land and Improvement Company (LATELCO 1980:58). Aymar was responsible for improvement and dredging of the Harang Canal. He apparently retained some further interest in the canal, and maintained it with his dredge until sale of his remaining interest in 1913. The canal was subsequently renamed "Harvey Canal No. 2," using the name of

the same family owned land company which owned and operated the Harvey Canal that connects the Mississippi River at Harvey opposite of New Orleans to Bayou Barataria, a length of 5 1/3 miles (Bank of Houma 1910:65). In April, 1924, the United States Government purchased the Harvey Canal No. 2, which later was improved to nine feet deep by one-hundred feet wide, and which formed part of the Intracoastal Waterway (Letter from the Secretary of War 1932:10). Until 1925, the Intracoastal Waterway was referred to as the "Inter-coastal Waterway" by various proponents of the inland waterway system (Bank of Houma 1910).

Since the acquisition and development of the Harvey Canal No. 2 as part of the Intracoastal Waterway system, Larose has prospered. Shipyards and related industries, such as the construction of shrimp boats, have developed in the Larose area. Louisiana Highways 1 and 308 were improved by 1930, providing passage for the trucks which replaced boats in transporting truck produce to market. Although as yet unincorporated, Larose today has a civic center, and it annually hosts a French Food Festival in October (1980:58, 59).

Recorded involvement of Ormand Aymar in Larose dates from 1897, the date of his purchase of the Harang Canal. Although Aymar later (1909) sold his interest in the canal to the Harvey Canal, Land and Improvement Company, Aymar continued to have an influential role in the Larose community. A review of succession and conveyance records in the Lafourche Parish Courthouse at Thibodaux, and informant interviews conducted in Larose during March and April, 1984, have demonstrated that Aymar played a key role in promoting settlement and development of the Larose area just before and during the first decades of the twentieth century. That role still is appreciated and remembered in Larose. As will be seen, Ormand Aymar also was the owner of the M/V Fox.

Ormand Aymar was the fourth of eight children born to William Henry Aymar and Elizabeth Sparks (Figure 6), the owners of Buena Vista Plantation situated on the west bank of the Mississippi River in St. James Parish. An educated construction engineer, Aymar was married to Caroline Augusta Fuller of New Orleans, whose father was a judge in Orleans Parish. Ormand and Caroline Fuller Aymar maintained a residence in New Orleans, where Mrs. Aymar and their three children, Harold Cole, Althea Florence, and Rodney Ormand lived. None of the children ever married. Althea and Rodney lived and died in New Orleans, passing away during the early 1980s. Harold still is living in Larose. Ormand Rodney Aymar died July 2, 1954, at his sister Althea's house in New Orleans. His succession was filed in Thibodaux, and a judgement was rendered November 4, 1955, leaving all real property in possession of Rodney, Althea, and Harold (Probate # 5293, Clerk of Court's Office, Thibodaux, Louisiana; Personal Communication, Mrs. Celina Nichols, Cut Off, Louisiana, March 19, 1984). At this time, Harold Aymar is the owner of the M/V Fox.

William Henry Aymar, Ormand's father, died in 1900, after

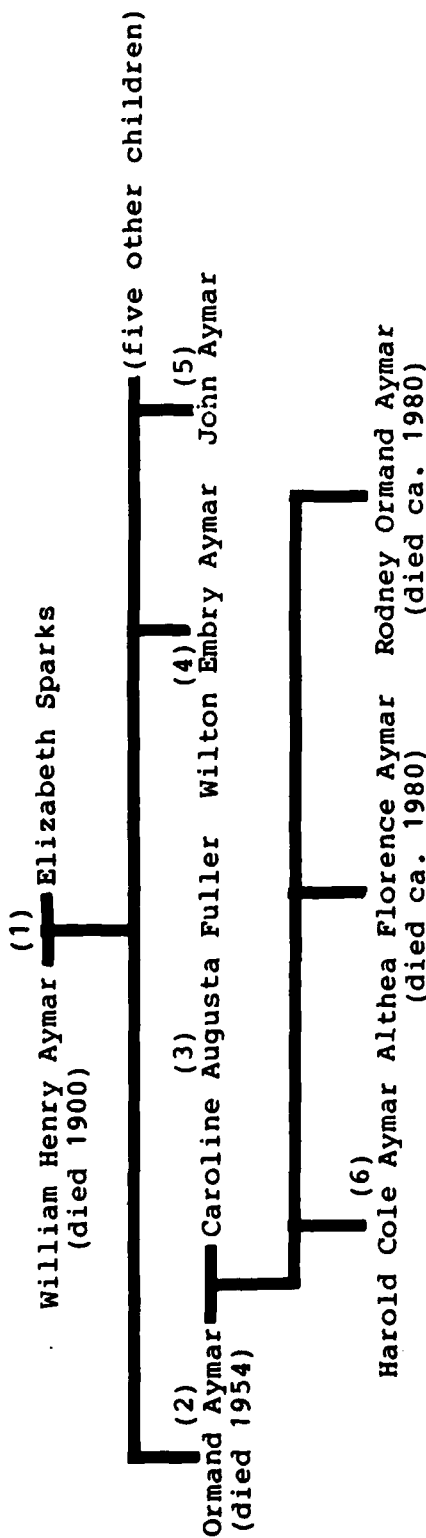


Figure 6 . Annotated recent lineage chart of the Aymar family.

1. Owners of Buena Vista Plantation, St. James Parish. They purchased land along Bayou Lafourche during the late nineteenth century.
2. An educated construction engineer, he promoted the settlement and development of Larose. He purchased the Harang Canal in 1897, and later sold it (1909). He was the owner of the Fox, and had it beached in 1934.
3. Daughter of a New Orleans judge.
4. Acted as executor for his father's estate. Became president of the Aymar Land Company. Ran a dredging operation on the Harang Canal with his younger brother, Ormand.
5. Owner of a service station at the corner of East Main Street adjoining the Aymar tract during the period when a hand-crank bridge across Harvey Canal No. 2 was in operation, eg., 1930s.
6. Present owner of the M/V Fox.

purchasing land in Lafourche Parish along Bayou Lafourche. His widow and eight children inherited all property and affects located in Lafourche Parish. The succession of William Henry Aymar was filed in Thibodaux on April 17, 1900 (Lafourche Parish Conveyance Volume 34:172). In 1902, a judgement was rendered on the succession petition, naming Wilton Embry Aymar, eldest son of William H., as lawful agent and attorney for the deceased's estate (Lafourche Parish Conveyance Volume 38:257, Act number 62,030). Wilton E. Aymar became president of the family-owned Aymar Land Company sometime before 1912, at which time the first reference to this company appears in the Lafourche Parish conveyance records. In 1912, a plat for the subdivision of property owned by the Aymar Land Company in the town of Larose was filed in the Parish Courthouse. It is apparent from oral histories that Ormand Aymar played a major role in the Aymar Land Company, and that lived much of the time on and managed the family's property in Larose.

An interview with Ormand's son, Harold, (personal communication, March 16 and March 20, 1984) revealed that Ormand and Wilton Aymar ran a dredging operation on Harang Canal that was equipped with a wooden hulled suction dredge. They operated the dredge along the canal, and also on an unidentified point on the south end of Lake Salvador. Live oaks on the point were cut, and shells were dredged there. Such activities were common during the 1920s and 1930s, when prehistoric shell middens were dredged for road material. Many of these prehistoric sites supported live oaks, since they constituted the highest elevations in the swamps and marshes along the coast. Harold recalled that his father worked "for the state for a while."

In addition to his land and dredging activities, Ormand Aymar was an extremely skilled construction engineer (Louis Cheramie and Wilcliff Guidry, personal communication, March 21, 1984; Wilkerson Guidry, personal communication, March 15, 1984). He was the only person in the area familiar with permitting procedure for construction on the bayou. He took measurements and drew plans for docks, wharves, buildings, and houses in the lower Lafourche area, and filed and obtained requisite permits for local development from the Corps of Engineers. He also obtained permits and registration for "trawlers down the bayou" from the Coast Guard.

In 1909, a hurricane greatly damaged the Holy Rosary church and other structures in Larose. According to local informants Louis Cheramie, Wilkerson Guidry, and Earl Cantrelle (personal communication, March 21, 1984), a dam was built across the canal after a crevasse occurred in 1909 or 1910. High water in 1912 also caused flood damage to structures along the bayou. In 1913, Ormand Aymar sold his remaining interest in the Harvey No. 2 Canal, and then began selling lots for the development of the town of Larose (LATELCO 1980: 57-58). Nevertheless, in 1916 Ormand Aymar was the owner of record of lots C and D in Square C, where the M/V Fox now is located (Figure 7). These lots are listed as part of the real estate described in Aymar's succession. Although no

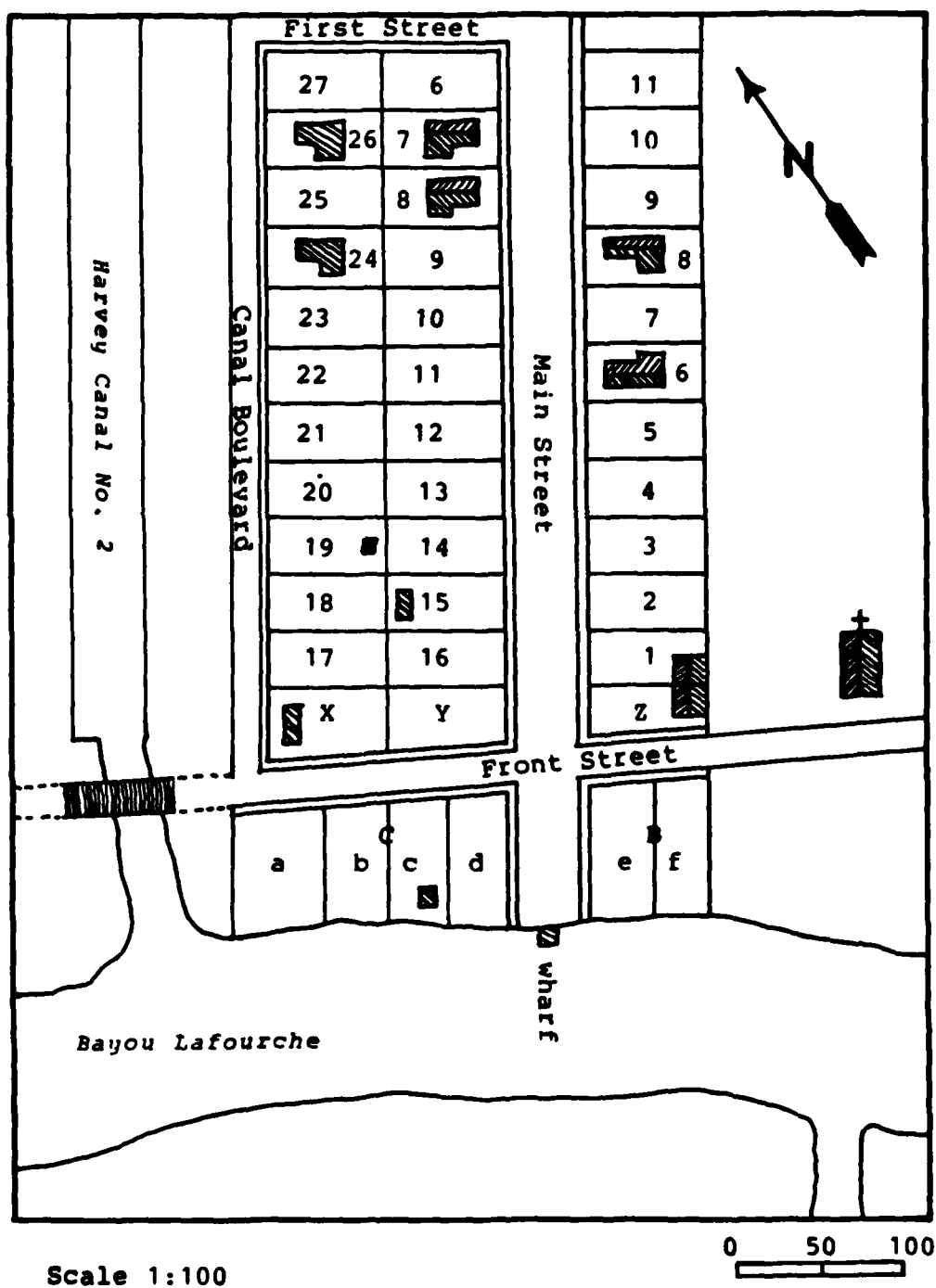


Figure 7. Aymar Land Company subdivision in Larose, redrawn from 1912 plan. (Map Index No. 485, Lafourche Parish Courthouse, Thibodaux, La.).

specific reference is made to any property besides real estate in the succession of Ormand Aymar, lots C and D were transferred to Ormand Aymar's heirs "together with all... advantages thereinto belonging or in any wise appertaining..." (Petition and Judgment on Succession of Ormand R. Aymar and Caroline Fuller, Seventh District Court for the Parish of Lafourche, Number 5293, filed November 4, 1955).

CHAPTER 5

WATER TRANSPORTATION, SETTLEMENT, AND COMMERCE ON HISTORIC BAYOU LAFOURCHE

The preceding discussion of the historic setting of M/V Fox has elucidated the major role played by the development of the Harang/Harvey No. 2 Canal in the settlement and growth of Larose in particular, and of the lower Lafourche in general. In addition, the role of the Fox's owner, Ormand Aymar in that development process has been addressed. These data indicate that the vessel itself, its historic context, and its history of ownership may relate specifically to several themes identified as significant in Louisiana's Comprehensive Archeological Plan (Smith et al., 1983). As defined by that plan, the Fox is located within Management Unit 5 (MU5), which comprises the southeastern portion of the state. Historic themes with potential relevance to the Fox are: flatboats and keelboats in the westward migration; the towing industry, tugs and barges; and, historic colonization of Louisiana (Smith et al., 1983). Because the Fox is a rivercraft, those aspects of these themes that relate to the vessel have water-borne transportation and commerce in common.

The nineteenth century was a period of booming westward expansion. Levels of production and demand for manufactured and agricultural products warranted the development of inexpensive and direct access to markets located both on the North American continent and overseas. Overland transport was difficult and time intensive prior to the construction of long distance railroads and of improved highways. Water transport provided the most practical means of getting the surplus to market. Because of the abundance of natural waterways, early in the nineteenth century Americans began to construct canals to connect these avenues of transportation.

Construction of major canals in the eastern United States began during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. One of the most notable was the Erie Canal, begun in 1817 and completed in 1825, which connected the Great Lakes with the Hudson River and thus with the Atlantic Ocean. The C & O Canal, designed by George Washington and completed in 1831, functioned on a smaller regional scale. The C & O canal provided access from the Washington, D.C., area along the Potomac River to western Maryland, where overland routes through the Allegheny Mountains were reached. Both of these canals exemplify progressive strides made in commerce and communication which were vital to the developing nation. The canal building era reached a peak by the mid eighteenth century on the east coast, when railroads began to replace the canals by providing a faster mode of travel.

In South Louisiana, virtually all historic exploration and settlement was accomplished using water borne transportation. This was facilitated by the many rivers and bayous of the region,

and it was required by the impenetrability of vast intervening wetland reaches using any other mode of transport. During the nineteenth century, canals were developed in South Louisiana to shorten travel times for the transport of goods to market. Canal construction in this region most frequently took the form of straightening or widening small waterways, or of connecting bayous and rivers. As noted previously, Harang Canal, later named Harvey Canal No. 2, was constructed shortly after 1846 and provided access to Bayou Lafourche from New Orleans via Lake Salvador and Bayou Barataria. The route of the M/V Fox also included what is now called the Harvey Canal No. 1 which was originally dug ca. 1840 (Swanson 1975:89).

Prior to the construction of good roads and to the completion of rail systems in south Louisiana, settlement and transportation focused on and utilized the waterways as a means of livelihood and communication. Boats played an integral part in daily life, and boat traditions in south Louisiana remain strong even today. Large boats brought goods from the port of New Orleans to settlers upriver and along the bayous, and transported timber, furs, fish, vegetables and other goods to the market in New Orleans.

Types and categories of boats evolved locally, based on their specialized uses. Sails, oars, poles, and cordelles all were common means of propulsion. Cordelles were towlines, several hundred feet long, which were attached to the mast of a boat. The crew would carry these, walking the shoreline and pulling the boat behind them. A bridle line was attached to the bow of the boat to prevent the boat from pivoting around the mast, and to steady the boat against wind and currents when a rudder could be used. It would take twenty to forty men to cordelle a large boat, and sometimes mules were used "a la cordelle" where the banks were stable and clear. When obstacles on the shore prevented walking the boat, the lines would be secured beyond the obstacle, and the crew would pull the boat by drawing in the lines. This maneuver was called "warping" (Haite 1964: 30-33; Leaky 1931:46-47).

In general, Louisiana boat styles resisted change until the advent of steampower in the nineteenth century and of gasoline engines at the end of that century. Small boats, whether propelled by hand, sail, steam driven after 1830, or gasoline powered after 1900, carried farm products to market, and brought tools, supplies, and luxury items in return. Floating stores, or trading boats, continued to cruise the rivers and bayous into the twentieth century, stopping at small towns and planters' wharves to trade or barter goods. Small boats ferried people and goods across and up and down the bayous, and towed barges laden with freight.

Changing modes of river travel and cargo transport on Bayou Lafourche are well-documented in several annual reports to the Chief of Engineers. In 1874, R.B. Talfor wrote that:

There were but two river steamboats regularly engaged during the past year in the navigation of the bayou, viz. the Henry Tete, with a carrying capacity of 1,000 hogsheads of sugar, and the Lizzie Hopkins, with capacity for 700. At high-water the bayou is navigable for these boats. For about eight months in the year it is navigable for them to Thibodeauxville; for the remaining four months navigation for this class of boats is suspended by bars, snags, the luggers being obliged to lower sails and cordelle. From Raceland a line of flat-boats make daily trips to Lockport, seven and a half miles below, and semi-weekly trips to the cut-off, twenty-two and a quarter miles below. From Thibodeauxville to Donaldsonville, during the low-water season, (which usually lasts from August to December,) 16 flat-boats are engaged in the carrying trade, and it is reported that they are frequently obliged to unload to get over the bars (Report to the Chief of Engineers 1874:766).

In 1866, all increase in the number of vessels and in the amount of cargo was demonstrated clearly in Maj. Heuer's report on Bayou Lafourche:

The commerce of Bayou La Fourche has been greatly benefited, the number of vessels having steadily increased as the obstructions were removed. Before any work of improvement the bayou was obstructed with snags, logs, and wrecks, from its head at Donaldsonville to a point about 22 miles below Lockport, that during the low-water season flat-boats and luggers drawing about 2 feet were the only kinds of vessels able to navigate. In some places, especially between Raceland and Lockport, a distance of 7 1/2 miles, even this was difficult, the luggers having to lower sail and cordelle. But since the removal of obstructions flat-boats and sailing vessels of even greater draught have passed up and down without difficulty. During eight months of the year, when the water is high, the bayou is navigable for large-size steamboats (Report to the Chief of Engineers 1886:1266).

By 1908, river transport had decreased:

The commerce of this bayou is carried principally by two small gasoline boats that ply between New Orleans and points along the Bayou. These boats reach New Orleans by the way of Barataria Canal (Report to the Chief of Engineers 1908:420).

One of these vessels was the M/V Fox.

The earliest cargo carriers were large dugout pirogues, adapted from the boats of Native Americans. Many were carved from a single tree fifteen to thirty feet long with beams ranging from three to thirty feet (Knipmeyer 1956:151-152). In addition, Leaky (1931:42) has described a common modification of this great pirogue type. Instead of single log construction, the vessel was widened by the insertion of a broad flat board that created a wider beam. The great cargo pirogues were common on the Mississippi River and on important bayous. By 1800, they were replaced by flatboats, barges, and keelboats, and finally by steamboats after 1830 (Knipmeyer 1956:152-153).

Flatboats varied in size from twenty to sixty feet in length. Hull construction consisted of large square timbers of hard wood, drawing a foot to two and a half feet of water when fully laden. Cabins were constructed on the deck, with access to the roof as another deck. Flatboats were guided by oars on the sides and stern, and steered from the bow with a short oar. Flatboats were used only for downstream transportation, and were sold downriver or dismantled for lumber (Leaky 1931:43). Flatboats primarily carried freight, rather than passengers.

The barge was a larger, two masted boat with accommodations for passengers. It was fitted with a covered cargo area over much of its length, and had a carrying capacity from 60 to 100 tons. A cabin area, usually about six by eight feet, served as quarters for sleeping (Leaky 1931: 45). These boats sometimes were pointed at both bow and stern, or had a pointed bow and blunt stern.

Keelboats were long, narrow boats with a shallow draft (Durant 1953: 126). They averaged sixty to seventy feet in length, with a fifteen to eighteen foot beam. The boat was pointed at both ends, and was fitted with a keel extending the length of the bottom of the boat to enable it to absorb the shock of contact with submerged obstructions. A cargo box, some four to five feet above the deck, covered the body of the boat except for decked areas at the bow and stern. Narrow footways about fifteen inches wide ran around the gunwales, providing walkways for the crew (Durant 1953:126; Leaky 1931:46). The boat was rowed or poled, or sail-assisted using a square sail rigged to a mast in the bow of the boat. They could carry between fifteen and fifty tons of cargo, but seldom more than thirty (Haite 1969:31). Many keelboats were made in Pittsburgh and later in Louisville. The journey from Pittsburgh to New Orleans took about two months; the return trip took four months (Durant 1953:126).

Two other boat types served as cargo carriers on large rivers and bayous. Smaller versions of these boats were used on the smaller streams and bayous. The bateau was a wide, flat-bottomed, keelless boat, with pointed bow and stern. It was propelled by oars, using a shorter oar as a rudder (Leaky 1931:42). The term bateau was used early in settlement of the Mississippi Valley, and was adopted by English speakers during the flatboat period beginning about 1800. A similar double-ended style built by early French settlers in Louisiana was called bateau plat, or flatboat. Another boat style with blunted bow and stern was termed radeau. During the last part of the eighteenth century, large double-ended flatboats, forerunners of the barge described above, were called "skiffs" (Knipmeyer 1956). Both bateau and skiff (esquiff) have come to have specialized meanings in French South Louisiana that differ from the eighteenth and nineteenth century definitions. Both terms designate small craft, under twenty feet in length, that are used on the inland waterways primarily for fishing and ferrying. Neither of these types has both pointed bow and stern; rather, the modern day bateau is a narrow craft with blunted prow and stern.

As will be seen in the following sections of this report describing the nature and configuration of the Fox, none of the aforementioned vessel classifications accurately describes that boat. Its double-ended hull shape resembles that of the much larger cargo carrying keelboats that plied the nation's riverine trade during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Figure 8). However, the keel of the Fox does not extend its entire length (Figure 9). Furthermore, in the Fox the keel functions as the key framing member, while in a true keel boat the large external keel acts as a false keel which extends the structural keel as a protective device against submerged objects and grounding. Again, the Fox is structurally unlike all of the other documented vessel types recorded for South Louisiana, although its functions were similar.

It is the functions of M/V Fox, its routes, and the dates of its use, then, that relate most clearly to significant themes in the history of Louisiana (Smith et al., 1983). As will be seen, the Fox functioned both as a passenger and cargo carrying vessel shortly after a direct navigation route between Bayou Lafourche and New Orleans was opened. This period of use coincided with the intensive settlement and economic development specifically of Larose and of lower Lafourche in general. It did so at a time when transportation technology was undergoing rapid change in response to the diffusion of industrial progress to the wetlands frontier of bayou Louisiana, prior to the advent of highway access to the area. In fact, public highways in Louisiana were maintained locally until 1908, when the first gravel highways were constructed (McGinty 195:263). This system of gravel roads spread across the state as automobile use increased. The Federal Aid Road Act, passed by Congress in 1916, was followed by the Federal Highway Act of 1921. The Louisiana Highway Commission, established in 1921,



Figure 8. Nineteenth century keelboat. (Howard Tilton Memorial Library, Louisiana Collection, Vertical File, Mississippi River Boats, Tulane University, New Orleans).

designated that the Southern National Highway which connected Los Angeles, California, and St. Augustine, Florida, would cross Louisiana using Highway 2. This route was later designated U.S. Highway 90. In 1932, the Louisiana Highway Commission reported that U.S. Highway 90 was paved across the state (Conrad 1979:30-36). As will be seen, U.S. 90 was completed just two years before the Fox was beached for the last time.

CHAPTER 6

GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY OF M/V FOX

The fox is a double ended cat rigged cypress motor sailer. It has a flat keel, a rounded bow, and a rounded stern. The hull is carvel planked, and the decks are laid with tongue-and-groove boards. The upper deck consists of the fore deck and aft deck, built at the gunwale level. The lower deck is laid directly on the floor timbers. The main cabin of the Fox extends from the lower deck and rises three feet above the rail. This cabin is windowed on all sides, and it is covered by tongue-and-groove boards. A middle deck forms the floor of the aft cabin, which rises five feet above the rail. The aft cabin was also windowed; and, it is roofed with tongue-and-groove boards. An engine mounted at the rear of the main cabin powered the Fox. It had a through-the-keel propeller shaft. A two part sailing mast stepped to the keel is located near the bow of the Fox. This mast, fitted with a yard and boom, supported a gaff rigged sail.

Figures 9 and 10, generated from measurements and from empirical data gathered in the field, depict the fox as it appeared at the turn of the century. The present condition of the vessel is shown in Figures 11 and 12. Clearly, the present condition of the Fox is deteriorated due to the effects of years of natural weathering, wave damage, vandalism, and of damage thought to have been caused by the impact of another vessel. According to Harold Aymar (Personal communication, March, 1984), "It got rammed with a barge, and it, the boat, put a hole in it....Then it got another lick during a kind of big storm here... just on the top." Natural weathering has resulted in substantial decomposition of the Fox's hull, and in the present rotten condition of the bottom planks (garboard strakes) and of parts of the keel. The "big storm" Aymar referred to apparently caused the collapse of the main cabin roof and of the port bulkhead. The vestiges of the main cabin roof beams and of the tongue-and-groove planks are shown in Figure 12.

Figure 13 illustrates hull damage consistent with that previously described by Harold Aymar as caused by the impact of a barge. The aft deck was broken away in one section as can be seen in Figure 13. Structural fractures were observed on the aft cabin bulkheads, floor timbers, frames (ribs), and outer planking. Additional damage, to the rudder assembly is shown in Figure 14. During the several months prior to the commencement of the research effort described herein, the vessel's steering wheel was stolen, apparently by someone from outside the Larose area (Tony Ougel, personal communication, March 16, 1984). However, this single act of vandalism was an isolated case, and was regarded with umbrage by the inhabitants of Larose who have resisted any opportunities for salvage or souvenir collection from the Fox because of their high regard for its past and present owners. The present condition of the Fox, then, has resulted from natural causes and from benign neglect.

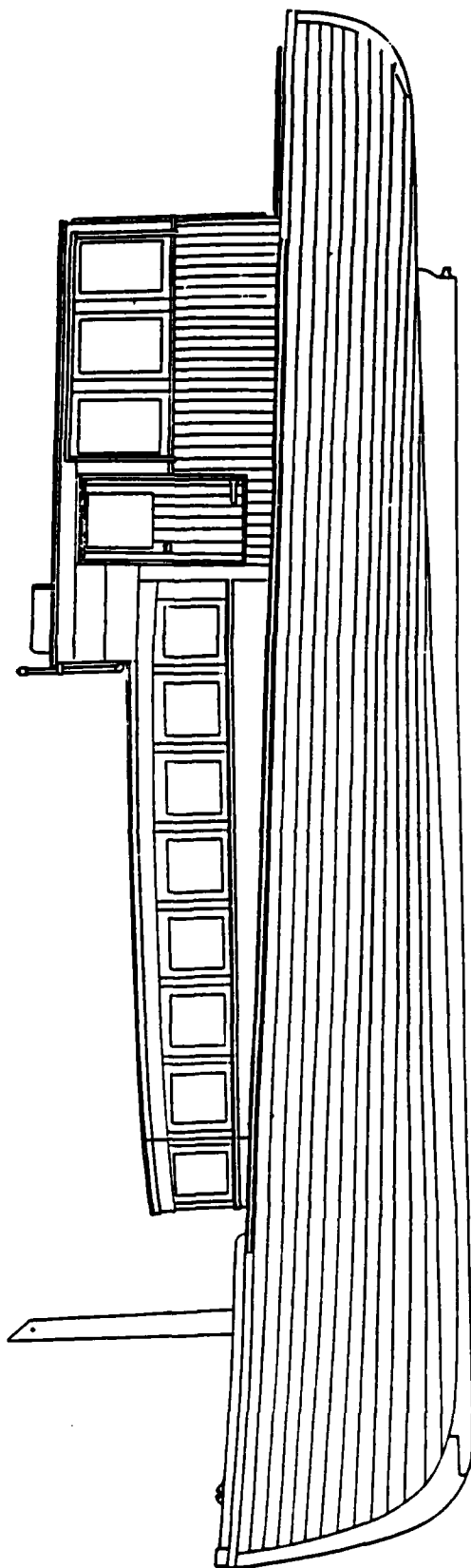


FIGURE 9 PROFILE OF THE MV FOX, SHOWING THE MAIN CABIN, AFT CABIN, LOWER MAST, AND CARVEL PLANKING.

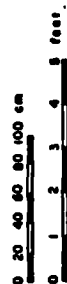


FIGURE 10 DECK PLAN OF THE MV FOX, SHOWING BULKHEADS, BENCHES, AND WINDOWS.

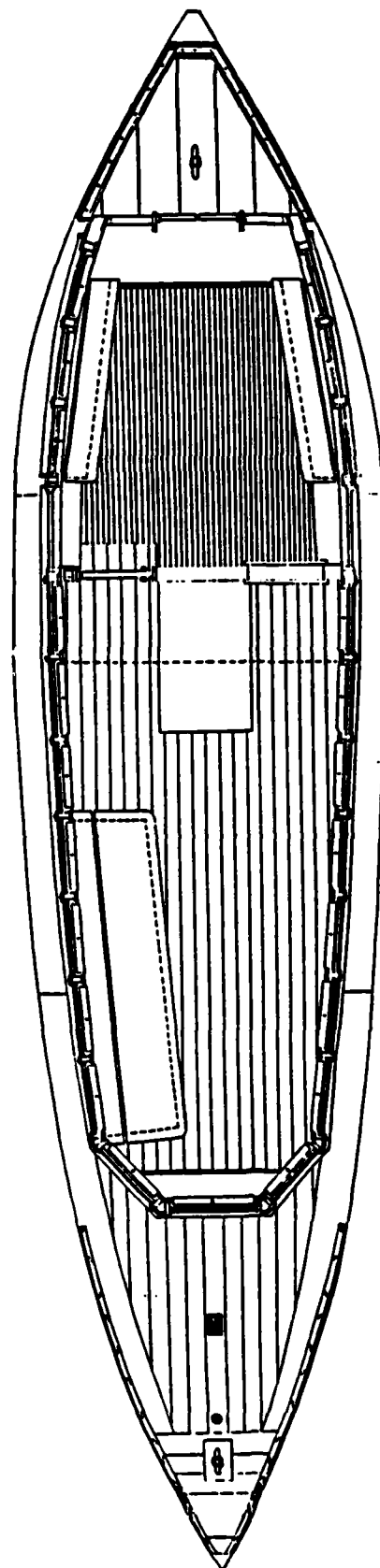




Figure 11. M/V Fox beached on the bank of Bayou Lafourche at its home port of Larose, La.



Figure 12. Interior of M/V Fox's main cabin, showing bench locker and collapsed main cabin roof.



Figure 13. View of stern section of M/V Fox, showing aft deck, aft cabin, and hull planking. The damage reportedly was caused by a runaway barge.



Figure 14. Closeup of M/V Fox's rudder assembly, showing rudder crosshead and rudderstock.

The Fox was built by an unidentified boatbuilder on Bayou St. John, in New Orleans, Louisiana (Harold Aymar, personal communication, March 15 and March 22, 1984). It has been established that the Fox's builder was not one of the major nineteenth century boatbuilders on Bayou St. John (viz Appendix 2, William Oberhelmann, tape 002; Harold Aymar, tape 001, Side B, and tape 004), a conclusion consistent with the yet to be described rare vernacular form of the vessel (see Chapters VII-IX). The actual date of the vessel's construction also is unknown. Jim Knowles of the Smithsonian Institution's Division of Transportation (personal communication, April 6, 1984), suggested a construction date ca. the 1870s, although he noted that the vessel's hull design certainly was earlier, and may date from prior to the War Between the States.

Wilkerson Guidry (personal communication, March 21, 1984) believes that the Fox was used by the Aymars forty-five to fifty years before it was beached. Ormand's son Harold is vague on the Fox's date of construction, which was well before his birth:

...that boat wasn't built when the canal was on.... They got it afterwards. A couple of years (personal communication, March 22, 1984).

The structural data contradict Harold Aymar in this instance. Wilcliff and Wilkerson Guidry were hired as boys to dig away the bank of Bayou Lafourche so that the Fox could be beached; using their own ages as a reference, they were able to establish the date of the beaching of the Fox with some precision as ca. 1934 (see Appendix 2). According to tradition, Ormand Aymar decided he wanted to pull the Fox out of the water "to fit that to go trawl" (Personal communication, Wilcliff Guidry and Louis Cheramie, March 21, 1984). He paid Wilcliff and Wilkerson Guidry each a dollar a day:

Aymar was paying us to take this dirt with a bucket, me and my brother, with a, by hand, you know. Take the dirt and carry it away, so we could bring the boat closer to the bank (Personal communication, March 21, 1984).

When the bank was excavated sufficiently, Manuel "Man" Orgeron oversaw the landing of the boat; it was pulled ashore either by hand, truck, or winch (Personal communication, Wilcliff Guidry and Louis Cheramie, March 21, 1984). During this interview Wilcliff Guidry was asked:

Q: And that boat, once they pulled it up, they never did anything more with it?

He responded:

A: That's all they did. They pulled it up. It's been there since then.

Thus, the M/V Fox has been beached at its present location for fully fifty years. It is clearly shown on a 1948 air photo of the Larose area (Figure 15). As noted previously, the Fox is beached at its home port, adjacent to the residence and machine shop of Ormand Aymar, the owner of Harang Canal from 1897 to 1909.

The use history of the M/V Fox can be reconstructed from oral histories and from structural details of the vessel. It served variously as a passenger, pleasure, cargo carrying, and work boat. Ormand Aymar used the boat regularly for travel on Bayou Lafourche and to journey to New Orleans via the Harang Canal, Lake Salvador, and the Harvey Canal in order to visit his family, residing in the city. The Fox also was used to carry people to Charity Hospital in New Orleans, prior to the development of decent roads in the area. Through his canal, Aymar's two cylinder Fox no doubt provided the fastest emergency ambulance service available to residents of Larose at around the turn of the century.

As a work boat, the Fox was used by the engineer Aymar for transport to survey and construction projects down the bayou where road travel was not feasible. In addition, as will be seen, the Fox was modified so that it could carry heavy cargo, such as machinery and construction materials. Too, the Fox often towed barges carrying a variety of loads too bulky or heavy for the vessel itself. These functional applications of the vessel notwithstanding, it is clear that the Fox also served, in real sense, as a private pleasure boat. Ormand Aymar took pride in this vessel, and maintained it cosmetically as a yacht. Wilcliff Guidry (personal communication, March 21, 1984) remembers the Fox nostalgically: "It was a nice boat, in those day, you know. It was something else, that boat. Pretty. Fine cabin on that. Like a pleasure boat." Louis Cheramie (personal communication, March 21, 1984) concurred: "It was just as nice as any boats they had on the bayou at that time."



Figure 15. 1948 air photo of the Larose area, showing the location of M/V Fox.

CHAPTER 7

CONSTRUCTION PHASES

As noted previously, the M/V Fox is a cypress hulled vessel thought to have been constructed originally on Bayou St. John in New Orleans during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. However, vessel morphology and informant interview data demonstrate clearly that the Fox underwent substantial structural change over the years. Indeed, Harold Aymar, the present owner of the Fox and 66 year old son of M/V Fox's original owner, told interviewers: "To tell you the truth, she's been remodelled" (Harold Aymar, personal communication, March 15, 1984). Three other local informants, Louis Cheramie, Wilcliff Guidry, and Wilkerson Guidry, recalled carpentry work on the M/V Fox, and two of these (Louis Cheramie and Wilcliff Guidry) named the carpenter who worked on the remodelling of the Fox as Manuel "Man" Orgeron of Larose, who is now deceased and who was employed by Ormand Aymar (see Appendix 2).

Extensive modification of a vessel that changes its structural, mechanical, or aesthetic character commonly is referred to in maritime circles as a "refit." The morphological history of the Fox is one of several refits. Originally built as an open cypress "double-ender," throughout its history the Fox underwent a series of structural modifications that apparently ended in the early 1930s. The initial reconstruction stage consisted of installing new frames, floor timbers, and a stem post. Superstructure was erected in the form of a main cabin and later an aft cabin. During this transformation, the Fox gained official "motor vessel" status with the installation of a "Fox" 2-cylinder gasoline engine from which the boat took its name. At that time, the keel was drilled through, to accommodate a propeller shaft. The original Fox engine subsequently was replaced with a 1905 "Regal" 2-cylinder gasoline engine.

The Fox also was used as a sailboat. It had a two-part mast, the base of which was stepped to the keel. Although the Fox's sailing capabilities probably were limited, two of its upper mast sections and a throated spar of adequate length to have supported a large sail were located in the cypress shed adjacent to the Fox.

The original structural members of the Fox included the keel, frames and planks. The keel forms the backbone of the hull, and the frames and planks are attached to it. The original cypress hull was carvel-built, a system of planking in which the outside planks or "strakes" are laid flush, with the edges meeting. This gives the shell a smooth surface, as opposed to the overlapping planks in the "lap-strake" construction of clinker-built boats. On M/V Fox, the planks were joined end-to-end using edge or "vertical" scarfs. These planks were secured to the frames with square nails driven from the outside, which were countersunk and the holes filled.

Transverse strength in a wooden boat is supplied by the frames, or "timbers," which act as "stiffeners" that hold the outside planking in shape and maintain the form of the vessel. Because they are integral structural members, frames generally are difficult or impossible to remove. Therefore, cracked or bent frames usually are left in place when new ones are laid alongside the damaged members. This was the case with the Fox, as seen in Figure 16. The new floor timbers and frames were dramatically larger, indicating that the original frames apparently were undersized, which may have led to their bending and fracturing. The second generation timbers and frames also were made of cypress, which was treated with creosote. Harold Aymar recalled that

The ribs were all right. But he just didn't want that....The old man renewed all the ribs in it... if you look inside the boat, it is all creosoted inside. At least all the ribs. We put [in] heavy ribs....To tell you the truth, we used to carry a hell of a lot of iron (Harold Aymar, personal communication, March 1984).

The new frames were joined by galvanized bolts, and round nails were used to secure the planking. The floor timbers were notched to fit over the keel, and the keelson was cut to accommodate them (Figure 17).

New deck planking undoubtedly was added, although only the extreme fore deck, aft deck, and part of the aft cabin deck remain today. Once again, the material used was cypress. According to Harold Aymar, "He [Ormand Aymar] was a man who believed in cypress. Her deck was all cypress" (personal communication, March, 1984). In addition to the new frames and deck planks, a new stem post was installed. Harold Aymar remembers "a very old stem on that thing. Cypress. Took the old stem out, 'cause it broke" (Harold Aymar, personal communication, March, 1984). The result was a double-ender measuring 37.0' (11.28 m) in length, with a beam of 9.0' (2.74 m). Aymar (Harold Aymar, personal communication, March, 1984) noted that, "she draws about 3 feet of water," which coincides with waterline measurements.

A chronology for the construction of the superstructure can be determined by careful examination of the area where the main and aft cabins join. The main cabin was covered by a system of beams overlain with tongue-and-groove planking, which, in turn, was covered with tar paper. The aft cabin is attached to the main cabin in camelback fashion, with a section of the main cabin roof extending into the aft cabin. That section is still present; it also was covered with tar paper, although it lay within the protected aft cabin. Thus, the main cabin demonstrates the first stage of superstructure construction, while the aft cabin illustrates the second (Figures 9 & 10). Referring to the construction of the aft cabin, Harold Aymar (personal



Figure 16. Closeup of M/V Fox's framing showing old ribs still in place next to new ribs and floor timbers.

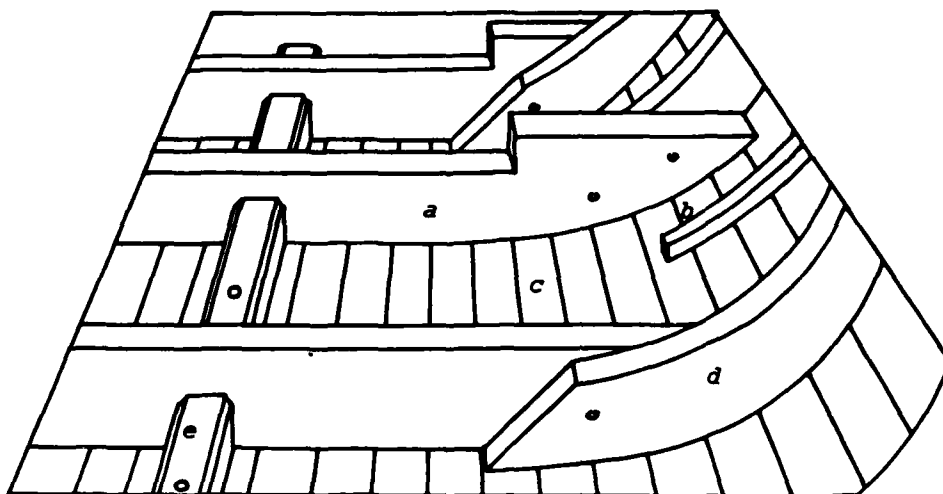


Figure 17. Detail of M/V Fox framing. (a) floor timber;
(b) old frame (rib); (c) carvel hull planking;
(d) new frame (rib); (e) keelson and keel.

communication, March, 1984) stated "My old man put that... it can be taken off if a man ever wanted to. We built that cabin, he built it out of cypress."

One of the finer points of design and carpentry of the main cabin is the treatment of the windows or "ports." The main cabin has a total of 17 rectangular framed sliding windows and one fixed window in the aft bulkhead. Space was provided within the interior of the bulkheads to accommodate the windows. Windows could be raised during inclement weather and lowered into recessed hideaways with hinged covers (Figure 10). The main cabin was protected from insects by an exterior covering of flyscreen which was held in place over the windows by thin strips of molding.

A combination locker and bench was built on the starboard side of the main cabin. A hinged top on the bench permitted storage beneath the seating area (Figure 10). The exterior surface of the inboard bulkhead of this bench was ornately beveled, exhibiting some of the fine craftsmanship utilized in refitting the Fox (Figure 12). Harold Aymar (personal communication, March, 1984) recalled, "It was nice inside. It's not rough. The old man got a nice way for seats...."

The lining of the main cabin consisted of finely carved tongue-and-groove planks which, when joined together, produced a continuous "corduroy" look. Edge scarfs also were used in joining the lining planks. The deck planking in the main cabin was removed, apparently after the Fox was beached. It probably was similar to that of the aft cabin. Thus, planking width for the main cabin deck as shown in Figure 10 is hypothetical.

No engine cover remains today in the main cabin. It may have been removed for maintenance and repair of the Regal engine. However, the former presence of an engine cover, which protected the passengers from heat and noise, is certain. The size and shape of the engine cover as shown in Figure 10 is an artist's reconstruction, based on the known size and position of the engine.

Entrance to the main cabin was provided by a hinged door located in the starboard half of the aft bulkhead. The main cabin deck extends into the aft cabin area, forming a step-down from the aft cabin deck which is higher than the main cabin deck. The aft cabin, which gives the impression of having been added as an afterthought, incorporates part of the main cabin into its design. The two share a common bulkhead. In order to make way for the propeller shaft and for the engine exhaust line, the aft cabin deck was built above the main deck level. It is supported by untreated cypress beams joined to the new framing timbers.

As in the main cabin, sliding windows in the aft cabin had covered hide-a-ways within port and starboard bulkheads (Figure 10). These windows also were covered with flyscreen. In addition to the six sliding windows, there are six fixed windows in the aft cabin. Two of these are located in the forward

"overhanging" portion of the aft cabin; this overhang is indicated by a hatched line in Figure 18. Two fixed windows are located on the port and starboard sides of this overhang. Entrance to the aft cabin is provided by doors on the port and starboard sides, directly aft of the main cabin and ahead of the aft cabin sliding window assemblies. An additional "French window" type door is located at the rear of the aft cabin. It is flanked by the two remaining fixed windows (Figure 10). A seventh fixed window is present between the main and aft cabins.

The aft cabin also has two hinged-top bench lockers similar to that of the main cabin. However, the aft cabin benches are not as wide, and their exterior finish is plain. Actual locker space of all three benches is delineated in Figure 10 using hatched lines.

Another unusual feature of the aft cabin is a small sliding bulkhead which joins the two benches at the rear (Figure 10). By removing this bulkhead, access is gained to the rudder post assembly and to steering linkages. This area no doubt was covered by boards which acted both as a step for the aft doorway and as a bench. Although that bench is missing, its wooden supports remain. The aft cabin deck is composed of tongue-and-groove planks three inches wide and running fore-and-aft. The overhead is similar to that of the main cabin, consisting of tongue-and-groove planks supported by beams. It also was covered with tar paper.

The progression of refits visible on the M/V Fox represents a sequence of structural adaptations to accommodate changes in vessel function and a changing technological milieu during the decades surrounding the turn of the nineteenth century. Initial modification by the engineer Ormand Aymar anticipated heavy cargo hauling. Further modifications allowed engine installation. An earlier low main cabin gave way to a higher aft cabin, which impeded lower movement of the boom. Although improved engines with higher horse power ratings were developed, hull design precluded further modernization of the Fox. Felix de Boisblanc, an eighty-one year old marine mechanic, described the problems encountered in modernizing double enders:

They were streamlined, those double-ended things. They were streamlined, and excellent at low powers. But when people started to put real horses in them, and expected to plane, they couldn't use boats like that. Those things wouldn't, wouldn't go anywhere (Felix de Boisblanc, personal communication, March 1984).

Thus, the construction history of the M/V Fox may be characterized as a dynamic transition from earlier sail-powered vessels to subsequent engine driven forms. This transitional nature reflects pervasive changes in lifestyle and in technology at the close of the nineteenth century. By the 1930s, M/V Fox already had become an engineering relict, with little practical application.

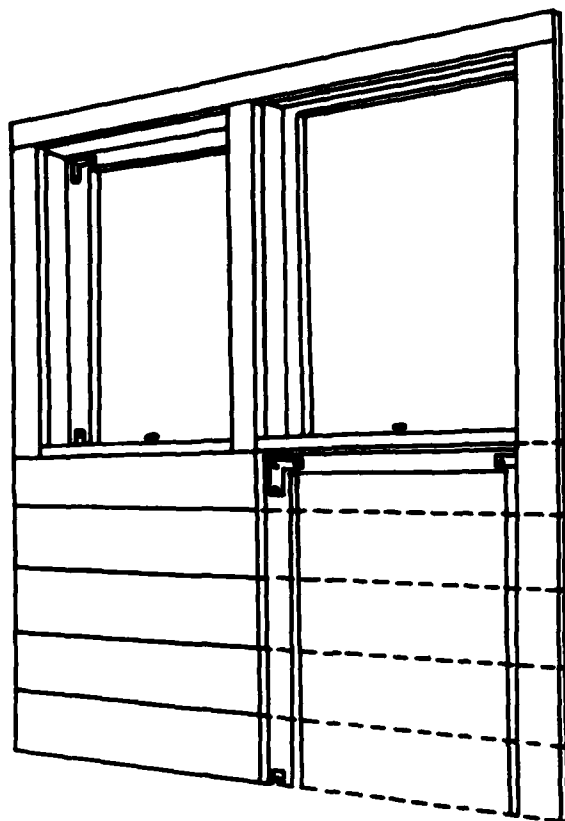


Figure 18. Perspective view of sliding windows in aft cabin of M/V Fox with cutaway view of window in down position.

CHAPTER 8

ENGINEERING

The installation of a marine engine in a vessel that was not previously motor driven requires several distinct structural modifications. These changes probably were undertaken prior to construction of the vessel's superstructure. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Regal engine was inserted after the main cabin was completed. Prior to actual engine installation, specialized engine mounts were constructed to accommodate both added weight and torque-related stress on the hull. These mounts took the form of 6" x 6" creosoted cypress beams that ran fore-and-aft, and which were bolted through the new cypress floor timbers.

In addition to engine mounts, modifications to the hull itself must be made in order to supply cooling water to the engine and to allow exhaust gasses to escape. "Through-hulls" are fittings which are fastened securely through the hull, the edges of which are caulked to prevent leaking. When placed below the waterline, through-hulls incorporate on-off valves into their design so that connecting lines and hoses may be replaced without hauling or dry-docking of the vessel. When used as an intake or cooling water pick-up, a screen usually is attached to the outside of the hull. This prevents grasses, weeds, and assorted flotsam from clogging the valve or from entering the engine. Occasionally, a "sea strainer" is placed in-line between the through-hull and the water pump, to further prevent obstacles from fouling the machinery.

The Regal engine operated on a raw-water cooling system which required through-hull installation. An additional through-hull was cut above the waterline to allow the exhaust fumes to pass through the hull. Other minor modifications such as the construction of an engine cover, installation of a fuel tank, fuel lines, and fuel fill fittings also were made. The fuel fill on the Fox can be seen just aft of the forward cleat in Figure 10. The fuel tank was positioned just before the foredeck at a level above that of the engine, to assist fuel flow using a gravity feed. In order to facilitate maneuvering, engine controls were placed at the forward most section of the main cabin, starboard of the steering wheel. The throttle linkage guide tube is shown in Figure 19.

Another major structural change necessary to engine drive involves the joining of the propeller shaft to the engine. In some cases, the propeller shaft is offset from the centerline of the boat; more commonly the shaft is passed through the keel. Although Harold Aymar is too young at sixty-six to remember the actual installation of the M/V Fox's propeller shaft, he apparently is familiar with that operation from his family's oral history:

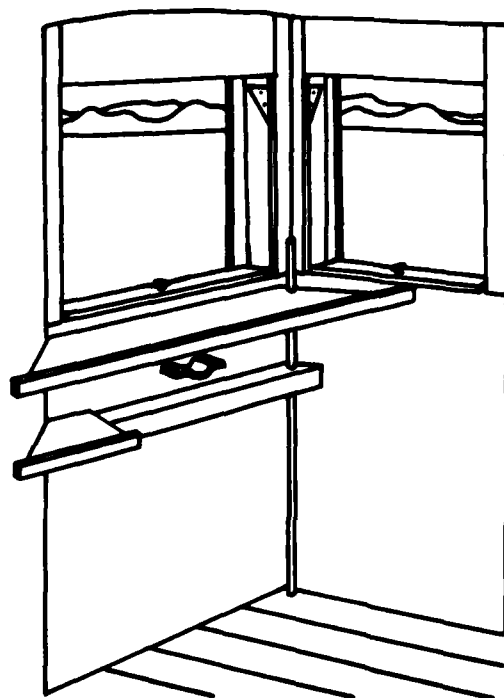


Figure 19. Perspective view of M/V Fox steering station at the forward end of the main cabin, showing the throttle linkage guide tube and lower steering wheel mount.

My old man was an engineer, construction engineer. He would measure, his measurements were good... All my old man did at that time [was to] bore a hole through the keel. In the back (Harold Aymar, personal communication, March, 1984).

This was a rather difficult task, and illustrates Ormand Aymar's skill as an engineer.

The nature of modifications to the steering system is less clear. The steering system was comprised of a standard rudder post assembly, with steering cables running down the inside of the starboard bulkhead from the steering station to pulleys or "blocks." These cables were connected to the rudder crosshead, which turned the rudder stock and rudder. The rudder assembly is shown in Figure 14. It appears to be constructed of the same creosote treated cypress that was used for much of the refit. No evidence of an earlier rudder assembly remains.

The subsequent replacement of the Fox engine with a two cycle, two cylinder Regal engine would have required relatively minor adaptations. Parts of the cabin or cabins probably were removed to allow installation of the Regal engine. Because the aft cabin deck is raised to allow the exhaust lines and propeller shaft to pass beneath it, the aft cabin post-dates the first installation of an engine. The relative construction sequence of the main cabin and of first engine is unclear. However, similar creosote-treated cypress beams were used for engine mounts and for the previously described framing modifications. Thus, these construction events probably represent components of a single major refit.

At the time of the M/V Fox's operations, only one other gasoline-powered motor sailer plied the passenger and supply run trade between the Larose area of Bayou Lafourche and New Orleans. Like M/V Fox, that vessel, owned and operated by a Mr. Lefort, utilized a two cycle, two cylinder engine. That engine was a Lathrop, rather than a Regal; however, these engines were very much alike. Felix de Boisblanc, an eighty-one year old proprietor of a marine engine service in New Orleans, recounted the operation of these engines:

They used to, they used to just swing, they had an enormous flywheel, very heavy, you know... and they'd swing it over in position there, and just step on the spoke, and that would come up the top... it was a two cycle job, you know?... and it, uh, had a spark plug, and you'd start'm off on a squirt can full of gasoline. It had petcocks. They opened up the petcocks, there, and they would release the compression so much they'd be easy to turn over. And... with a little

gasoline in the petcock, there, and she'd start, uh, she'd start running, you see. And then you'd switch it on over to the diesel.... It had big, wide rings there, about 5/8ths of an inch wide, and um, they were a remarkable engine. They didn't have too much power. They started off about 16 horsepower for a 2-cylinder job, and went on up to a little bigger size, a 24. But they would run from here to hell! You could hear them at Biloxi. The noise they made was unmistakable. When those, those schooners out of Biloxi, you see they'd trawl with the sail, they wouldn't trawl with the motor, just use the motor to get in and out with, you know?... and they'd block'm up to keep'm from turning over because, uh, you'd imagine, well, the force of water turning against the propeller, it would be less if they let it turn. But it didn't work that way. You'd block'm up with a piece of wood, you see?... And, uh, keep them from turning and they offer less resistance (Felix de Boisblanc, personal communication, March, 1984).

Although no one alive today remembers Ormand Aymar's purchase of the Regal engine, Harold Aymar (personal communication, March, 1984) believes that it was bought from Alex Barker, owner and sole proprietor of Barker Barge Line which operated steamboats out of Lockport (Figure 20). Barker's "semi-weekly" freight service from New Orleans to Bayou Lafourche travelled the Harvey Canal No. 2, and thus passed Ormand Aymar's home and shop regularly. Barker had a boat-building, repair, and dry dock facility at Lockport, and traded in boat engines and supplies (Bank of Houma 1910). All early records of Barker Barge Line were lost when that facility was purchased from Barker's heirs by Halter Marine about fifteen years ago (Mr. Dupont, Halter Marine, Lockport, personal communication, March 1984).

Barker Barge Line,

CAPTAIN ALEX. BARKER.
CONNECTING WITH
SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD.



Operates Steamboats

Lockport and Climax,

... ALSO ...

Freight Barges

A Bi-Weekly Service Leaving New Orleans Mondays and Thursdays at 2 P. M., to all Points on
Bayou Lafourche, Between Harvey's Canal No. 2 and Angelo's Store.

LOCKPORT, LOUISIANA.

Figure 20. 1910 advertisement for Captain Alex Barker's steamboat and barge line, Lockport, La.

CHAPTER 9

M/V FOX AS A SAILING VESSEL

By definition, a motor sailer is any craft provided with dual means of propulsion. This category includes both sailboats of limited mechanical power and motor vessels with small sail areas. The Fox falls into the sail-assisted motor vessel group. However, the hull configuration of the vessel antedates motor propulsion, and clearly demonstrates a functional design for shallow, inland waters. As noted previously, the vessel lacked a deep keel, and drew only three feet of water. This keel design consequently restricted the vessel's close-hauling sailing capabilities. A center board or leeboard design, clearly absent from the Fox, would have obviated this shortcoming. There are several points-of-sail that can be negotiated successfully by shallow draft mono-hulls, especially when running or reaching. The Fox probably was sailed only when favorable winds were present.

Harold Aymar consistently and repeatedly referred to the Fox as a "Bayonne" style vessel. Examination of available historic and archival materials, and interviews and subsequent research at a variety of institutions in the United States (Table 2), failed to divulge records or descriptions of Bayonne style boats. It may be concluded from this that the Fox hull configuration derives from a poorly documented historic vernacular form. Both Norman Brouwer of the South Street Seaport Museum in New York (Norman Brouwer, personal communication, April, 1984), and Jim Knowles of the Smithsonian Institution's Division of Transportation (Jim Knowles, personal communication, April, 1984) suggested an origin in France, perhaps in the area of Bayonne, on the Cote d'Azur.

Since the vessel was considered a possible vernacular style, a brief folk taxonomy of boat types was compiled during informant interviews of native Cajun French speakers in Larose and along Bayou Lafourche (Table 2, informants Cantrelle, Cheramie, Wilcliff Guidry, Wilkerson Guidry, Ougel, and Rodrigue). All of these informants readily identified the Fox as a "pointu" or "pointu les deux bouts." Although this terminology simply describes a two pointed hull, an historic vernacular class of vessels known as "pointu" is documented for the Toulon district of the Departements Bouche du Rhone and Var on the Mediterranean Coast of France between Nice and Marseilles. According to de Kerchove (1961:594), the pointu is a locally given name to:

small boats with a sharp stern used by
fishermen and boatmen around the harbor and
roadstead.... They are open or half-decked.

Thus, it is feasible, albeit unconfirmed, that the hull design of the Fox derives from a tradition of an Old World origin that had continuity in French Louisiana prior to the advent of engine power. When asked "what kind of boat would you call that [Fox]," Wilkerson

Guidry (personal communication, March 16, 1984) replied: "Bateau pointu les deux bouts 'bout the only thing I know."

Informant interviews revealed that the Fox's sail was stolen; Harold Aymar (personal communication, March, 1984) recalled, "I had a sail and they stole them, broke into my shop and stole them." All that remains of the Fox's rigging are the lower mast aboard the Fox; two top mast sections and a boom were stored in a nearby shed. This shed can be seen in a 1912 Aymar Land Company map (Figure 7), and in Figure 21.

The overall rigging of the masts is the same, although their dimensions are different. Figure 22 shows the top masts and the relative positions of the masthead fittings and of the topping lift blocks. The shorter of the two masts appears to be older. Its hardware is in poor condition, and the treatment of the wood is different from that of the taller mast and boom. The fittings on the taller mast and the boom hardware are similar in condition; the wood of both has been stained or painted a rust-red color.

Although these masts do not appear to have the same age, they are functionally identical. Both have masthead fittings for securing stays or halyard tackle, and both have mid-mast fittings. The taller mast has a topping lift block secured to its mid-mast fitting. This could have been used to support the yard of a lug sail or a gaff sail. Both masts have been cut diagonally and notched to fit on the lower mast aboard the Fox (Figure 22). The shorter mast has three holes drilled through it at its lower end, which presumably were used to lash bolt or clamp it to the mast base. The lower mast has two holes.

According to Harold Aymar (personal communication, March, 1984), his father, Ormand Aymar, installed the lower mast in the Fox, which is stepped to the keel. The generally poor condition of the garboard strakes and of the floor timbers in the fore peak of the Fox today, makes it difficult to ascertain with certainty if the lower mast was installed prior to the initial refit. Nevertheless, the condition of the shorter and seemingly older mast indicates that the lower mast (mast base) and the short mast were part of the Fox's original inventory, and that the taller mast and boom were products of the refit, replicating the original equipment.

The configuration of the masts, boom, and of their fittings implies the use of either a lug sail or gaff sail. Harold Aymar described the rig as "cat-rigged" (Harold Aymar, personal communication, March, 1984). A cat rig is



Figure 21. View looking north of M/V Fox's rigging storage shed, showing top mast sections and throated boom. Larose, La.

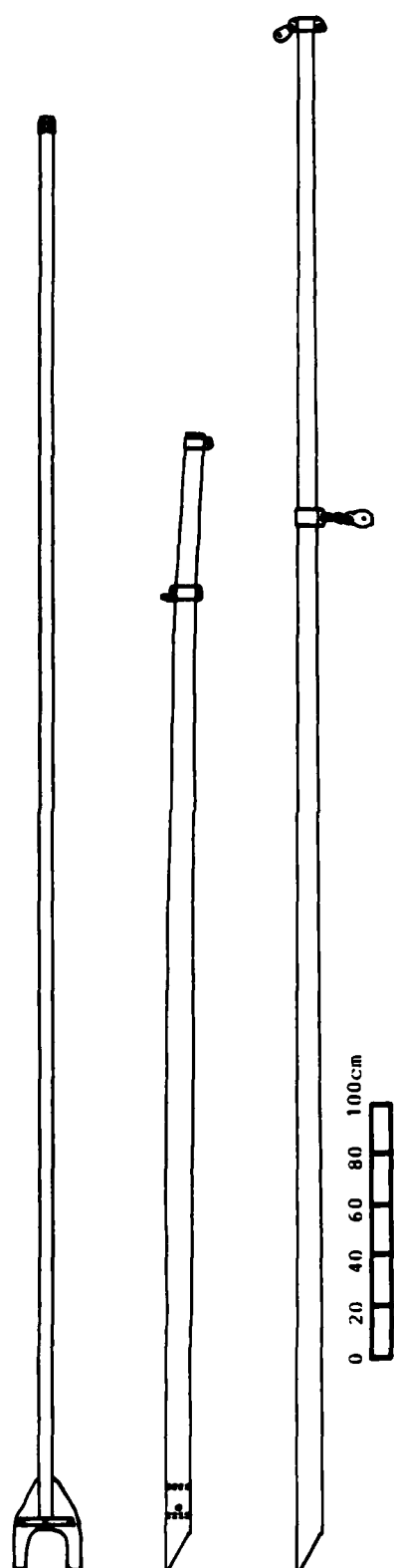


Figure 22. Scale drawing of boom and top mast sections, showing the throated boom, mid-mast and mast head fittings, outhaul, and topping lift block.

a rig of one sail, the peculiarity of which consists in the manner in which the sail is hoisted. The mast is stepped very far forward, and a yard considerably longer than the mast runs along it, carrying a sail which is supposed to represent both the main and top-sail of other rigs (Ansted 1972:42).

In addition,

the foot of the sail is of considerable length, requiring a boom extending several feet over the stern. A single stay running from masthead to stemhead, forms the only standing rigging (de Kerchove 1961:132-133).

These descriptions of a cat rig match the position of the mast and of the parts of the rig still extant on the Fox. In Figure 9, the location of the lower mast (mast bases) is shown just behind the bow of the Fox. The position of the topping lift block on the taller mast approximates that of similar fittings used to hoist a gaff or lug sail. Mast head fittings also are present to which a head stay could have been fastened.

Using a gaff-rig model, an estimated sail area of approximately 270 square feet was calculated. Because gaff sails are basically square, sail area can be estimated simply by multiplying the boom length, from throat to outhaul (15 ft), by the mast height, from boom to topping lift (18 ft). Harold Aymar (personal communication, March, 1984) recalled: "we made a sail... a great big sail.... It had a great big boom... they had to have big ropes to hold the sail."

When joined to the mast, the boom extended to and above the aft end of the main cabin. However, such a sail configuration would bisect the "overhang" of the aft cabin shown in Figure 9. Placement of the boom high enough up the masts to clear the aft cabin would have reduced the potential sail area by approximately thirty percent (to 190 square feet). This demonstrates that the boat could have been sailed after the main cabin was built, but that it probably was not sailed after the addition of the higher, aft cabin.

The use of sail as auxiliary power in favorable conditions apparently was common. Harold Aymar noted that

...they used to have lug sails out here, they all had one mast, but it was a lug sail. Hard to sail a course, you see. But it was good. They saved money (personal communication, March 1984).

This characterizes the Fox's use of sail during favorable winds. Clearly, its engine was the major source of propulsion.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing sections of this report have established the environmental setting, historic context, and use and structural history of the M/V Fox. The framework for this effort was a research design that emphasized the elucidation of important themes in the history of the lower Lafourche region, of the State of Louisiana, and of the nation at large, that have relevance to or are exemplified by the M/V Fox. These data now will be applied in the evaluation of the significance of the Fox using the criteria for National Register eligibility established in 36 CFR 60.4.

First, it is necessary to determine the category of historic property represented by the M/V Fox. According to the National Park Service's draft standards (June 1, 1982), entitled "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," an object is

... a thing of functional, aesthetic, cultural, historical, or scientific value that may be, by nature or design, movable yet related to a specific setting or environment.

The Fox, a cypress hulled boat constructed during the nineteenth century, was by nature and design movable; it had functional value, but now represents a relict of historical value and interest; and, as outlined above, it clearly is related to its setting, having been beached for fifty years on the bank of Bayou Lafourche at its home port of Larose. Thus, the M/V Fox may be considered within the category of objects during evaluation of its significance.

Similarly, the draft standards (June 1, 1982) define a site as

... the place where a... pattern of events occurred.... A site may also be (sic) the location of a ruined building, structure, or object if the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archeological significance.

Since this report and its conclusions pertain only to the M/V Fox, and by extension to that portion of the bank of Bayou Lafourche on which it rests, it is difficult to define the Fox as a site except for the fact that it has rested in its present location for fifty years. Thus, the M/V Fox itself, and the land on which it rests within the impact corridor of the Larose floodgate feature, properly should be categorized as an historic object, rather than as a site.

Nevertheless, as discussed earlier, the cypress shed adjacent to the vessel contains the sailing hardware for the Fox, and that shed is one of a number of nineteenth century standing

structures located within a compound or complex formerly occupied and presumably constructed by Ormand Aymar, former owner and operator of the Harang Canal which became part of the Intracoastal Waterway system. Furthermore, the barns, sheds, and yards of the Aymar compound contain a vast array of historic refuse, ranging from early engines and tools to the faunal detritus of the Aymar occupation. With reference to future planning and projects, then, the attention of federal and state agencies, and especially of the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer, hereby is drawn to the existence of the Aymar compound as an historic and archeological site that is potentially eligible for the National Register and which merits complete documentation for determination of eligibility prior to the undertaking of any projects governed by Section 106 of PL 89-665, as amended.

General historic themes identified by the Louisiana State Historic Preservation officer as significant (Smith et al., 1983) that are relevant to the Fox and which the Fox exemplifies were enumerated in Chapter V. These themes all involved the influence of Louisiana's rivers, bayous, and vascular wetlands on the settlement history, transportation history, and history of commerce and economic growth of the state. In addition, the role of canal construction in the westward expansion of the nation was discussed briefly, with attention to the importance of the Harang/Harvey No. 2 Canal to the settlement and economic development of the lower Lafourche region. The history and development of the structure and function of historic rivercraft in Louisiana was reviewed briefly, since such rivercraft constitute a major class of objects or artifacts that represent the developmental trends that are the subject of the historic themes already reviewed. This discussion is particularly cogent in light of the fact that Louisiana's Comprehensive Archeological Plan (Smith et al., 1983:270) has characterized nineteenth century rivercraft as "rare," and that the state site files contain no records whatsoever of vessels similar to the Fox. Research also firmly established the place of the Fox in the history of transportation and commerce in Larose, and the key role the Fox's owner, Ormand Aymar, played in the overall development of Larose and of the lower Lafourche region. Finally, Chapters V-IX demonstrated that the structural design of the Fox is antique, possibly unique, and that it may derive from an ancient French vernacular form, from eighteenth and nineteenth century keelboats, or from a combination of these.

Together, these data permit evaluation of the significance of the Fox using the National Register criteria (36 CFR 60.4). The first of these criteria involves association "with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history." The Fox was associated with the Harang/Harvey No. 2 Canal, a forerunner of part of the Intracoastal Waterway system, which served as the focus of the lower Lafourche region's transportation system, commerce, and economy. This canal also served as the enabling mechanism for the major settlement and development of the lower Lafourche region at large. The Fox is an

exemplar of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century mode of transportation in the region, and has been shown to have served as the primary means of emergency transport during the period of the establishment of Larose as a viable community. Thus, the Fox meets the criterion of association with significant patterns of events. Because of its role in the development of Larose, the Fox is significant on the local level. Because of the importance of the Harang/Harvey No. 2 Canal to transportation, commerce, and settlement history in the region specifically and in the state of Louisiana at large, and due to the demonstrated association of the Fox to those themes, the Fox is evaluated as significant on the state level, as well.

The second criterion involves association with the lives of persons significant in our past. The role of Ormand Aymar in opening the lower Lafourche region to settlement and to economic growth has been discussed in detail. As the owner, operator, and person responsible for the deepening and maintenance of the Harang/Harvey No. 2 canal from 1897 until 1909, Ormand Aymar was a key figure in the history of the Intracoastal Waterway system in Louisiana. As the chief permitting functionary on lower Bayou Lafourche, Aymar also was responsible for much of the construction and development that occurred there around the turn of the last century. Ormand Aymar was the owner and operator of M/V Fox. Thus, the Fox meets the criterion of association with the life of a significant personage. Because of the key role played by Aymar in the development of Larose, the Fox is significant at the local level. Because of the role played by Aymar in the development of the Intracoastal Waterway system in Louisiana, the Fox also is significant at the state level.

The third criterion involves the quality of significance of an object that embodies

the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, ... or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (36 CFR 60.4).

As noted previously, the M/V Fox is a double-ended cat rigged motor sailer with a flat keel, rounded bow, and rounded stern. Built during the 1870s or 1880s, the Fox represents a style of vessel known locally as pointu or pointu les deux bouts. Extensive archival research, interviews with maritime historians at major academic institutions across the nation including the Smithsonian Institution which houses the Historic American Maritime Survey records, and in depth oral histories, failed to reveal a single comparable rivercraft. The Fox does resemble pictorial accounts of eighteenth and nineteenth century keelboats that plied our nation's rivers during the period of major westward expansion. However, it does so primarily in terms of its double ended nature, and other such resemblances are vague at best. Furthermore, the structural configuration of the Fox, and the local folk taxonomic

classification of it as "pointu les deux bouts" recalls a similar "pointu," a class of vessels that plied the nearshore and harbor trade of the French Mediterranean. Whatever its ultimate origin in boatbuilding tradition(s), it is clear that the Fox represents an antique, possibly unique, and heretofore undocumented or very poorly documented vessel form. Insofar as embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type is concerned, the Fox very well may constitute the sole survivor of an extinct South Louisiana vernacular vessel form that derives from the grand tradition of keelboats, from an Old World tradition, or both. The absence of other examples of this form on Bayou Lafourche gives the vessel local significance. The absence of comparables in state records provides tangible proof of its significance on the state level. The rarity of this vessel form or style, and the probability that no others of its kind survive today, indicate that the Fox can contribute to understanding of the history of the nation. For these reasons, it is believed that the Fox is significant at the national level.

At this point, then, it is clear that the Fox already has provided information important in history, and that its potential to do so in the future has not been exhausted. Thus, the Fox also meets the fourth criterion of significance at the local and state levels, and possibly at the national level, as well. The final issue to be resolved insofar as National Register eligibility is concerned is integrity. The draft standards of the National Park Service (June 1, 1982) entitled "How to Apply the National Register Criteria" explain integrity as the authenticity of a historic property as evidenced in its "location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association" (36 CFR 60.4).

As discussed previously, the location of M/V Fox is at its historic home port. In other words, the Fox may be considered in situ. The setting for the Fox, on Bayou Lafourche at its confluence with that portion of the Intracoastal Waterway that formerly was the Harang/Harvey No. 2 canal may be considered pristine. The primary construction material of M/V Fox is Louisiana cypress. Although deteriorated, the original cypress timbers and frames still are present in the Fox. The workmanship of the Fox exhibits the fine skills of craftsmen. The construction details of the Fox are described above. The feeling evoked by the Fox is one of appreciation for fine craftsmanship coupled with a sense of the vastness of change in lifestyles and in the environment during the last century. The association of the Fox with significant historic events and persons is direct and demonstrable. Finally, the design of the Fox as reflected in its construction and engineering reflects two eras of American technological development and articulates aspects of each in a vessel form specifically adapted to the requirements of life on lower Bayou Lafourche around the turn of the century. It is clear, then, that the Fox possesses the quality of integrity required for National Register eligibility.

For these reasons, then, it is concluded that the M/V Fox fulfills the criteria for nomination to and inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

CHAPTER 11

RECOMMENDATIONS

Because of the demonstrated historic significance of the M/V Fox, measures should be taken to avoid or to mitigate the adverse effects of the implementation of the Larose Floodgate feature. Plans for completion of this project and for bankline stabilization of Bayou Lafourche at the location of M/V Fox currently require earthmoving which, if not mitigated, would destroy the vessel. Simple avoidance of the Fox would require redesign of the Larose Floodgate. It is recommended that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, explore fully the redesign option in order to determine the feasibility of avoiding direct adverse effects to M/V Fox. As an adjunct to this recommendation, it is suggested that any and all excavation, dredging, filling, or other earthmoving activities in the immediate vicinity of M/V Fox be monitored closely by qualified personnel in order to protect this historic resource. Because of the precarious setting of the Fox and due to the projected increase of potentially destructive wave wash on Bayou Lafourche after completion of the Larose Floodgate, with or without redesign to avoid direct adverse effects, it further is suggested that even if simple avoidance is feasible, additional measures should be undertaken to mitigate indirect adverse effects. At minimum, recordation of the vessel to HAER/HAMS standards should be undertaken pursuant to Section 110(b) of PL 89-665, as amended. The Historic American Engineering Record should be contacted to determine what documentation is required, and it should be afforded the opportunity to comment on such documentation prior to demolition or alteration of the vessel.

If avoidance of direct adverse effects through project redesign is not feasible, measures definitely should be undertaken to mitigate the adverse effects. Because of the deteriorated condition of the vessel, moving the Fox would be a time intensive and extremely costly project that probably would damage the structural integrity of the vessel in any event. Furthermore, the integrity of the vessel and its significance under criteria A and B of 36 CFR 60.4 are closely tied to its location in situ at its home port. In order for the Fox to have viability for modern use ("Manual of Mitigation Measures," Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, October 12, 1982:8), for example, as an educational tool in a museum location, major repair and reconstruction would have to be undertaken at major public expense, and such endeavors no doubt would be destructive of the integrity and significance of the Fox. For these reasons, then, the moving option is not considered a viable mitigation alternative.

Because of the deteriorating condition of the vessel and the lack of a movement option for it, a program of recordation is recommended in order to mitigate direct adverse effects. The primary difference between avoidance through redesign with

recordation and recordation without protective covenants is time. Avoidance with recordation would afford a longer period for examination of the vessel by interested laymen, maritime historians, and by specialists in historic engineering, woodworking, and related disciplines. Such an opportunity would be a beneficial effect because of the unique nature of the Fox. Because the Fox appears to be the last surviving vessel of its class, it also is suggested that recordation to standards be augmented by the creation of a faithful scale model using Louisiana cypress, and that such a model be deposited in the Center for Louisiana Boatbuilding at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, on Bayou Lafourche. Such a model would provide a tangible record of the pointu les deux bouts that could be appreciated by and educational to future generations of Louisianians, as well as by maritime historians. This recommendation is made in keeping with the spirit of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's "Manual on Mitigation Measures," which describes the preservation planning process as a creative one that seeks innovative solutions to substantive preservation problems.

Although the loss of M/V Fox is a matter of time regardless of the nature of mitigation measures undertaken, a record, however incomplete, now exists of an historic vessel type that is teetering on the edge of extinction. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District (Stout and Muller 1983) is complimented for the discovery and recognition of the potential importance of the Fox.

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APPENDIX 1

GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

GLOSSARY

Bateau: Nineteenth century use: wide, flat bottomed, keelless, double-ended boat used for cargo and passenger transport on large rivers and bayous, original French term for "boat" adopted by English speakers. Twentieth century use: French Louisiana term used predominantly in the Atchafalaya Basin to describe long, keelless, flat bottomed, blunt-ended boat used for long-distance travel, fishing on large lakes, and lumbering activities, adapted for use with 2, 4, 6 1/2, and 8 hp inboard motors.

Bateau plat: Eighteenth and nineteenth century use: French Louisiana term for large cargo and passenger carrying flatboat with a pointed bow and stern.

Blocks: A mechanical contrivance consisting of one or more grooved pulleys mounted in a casing or shell fitted with a hook, eye, or strap by which it may be attached.

Boom: A general name given to a projecting spar or pole that provides an outreach for extending the foot of sails or mooring boats handling cargo bearing a ship from a quay wall, and so on.

Bulkhead: A name given to any vertical partition whether fore and aft or athwartships which separates different compartments or spaces from one another.

Carvel planking: A system of planking in which the outside planking of a vessel or boat is flush: the edges meeting and giving the shell a smooth surface instead of overlapping as in the clinker system.

Centerboard: A movable fin or sliding keel made of wood or metal, pivoting in a fore-and-aft slot at the forward lower corner.

Clinker planking: A method of planking used for small craft in which the lower edge of each strake overlaps the upper edge of the strake next below. Also called lapstrake planking.

Close Hauled: The trim of a vessel's sails when it endeavors to make progress in the nearest direction possible towards that point of the compass from which the wind blows.

Cordelle: Towline used to "walk" a hand propelled vessel upstream against prevailing winds and currents.

Double-ender: A boat built with a sharp stern having nearly the same lines as the bow.

Esquiff: French term equivalent to English "skiff." Twentieth century use: In French South Louisiana, refers particularly to a small, flat bottomed, pointed bow, blunt stern boat used for ferrying, fishing, trapping, and hunting. It is always rowed, if not propelled by an outboard motor.

False Keel: A wooden keel fastened lightly under the main keel to protect it in case of grounding.

Floor timber: The timbers fixed athwart the keel and upon which the framing is erected.

Forepeak: The space between the collision bulkhead and the stem.

Frame: One of the transverse girders forming the ribs of the hull and extending from the keel to the highest continuous deck.

Gaff: A spar for extending the head of the fore-and-aft quadrilateral sail.

Garboard strake: The first range of planks laid on a ship's bottom next to the keel.

Gunwale: The upper edge of a vessel's or boat's side.

Head stay: In small craft, with pole masts such as sailing yachts, the foremast stay which runs from truck to stemhead or bowsprit end.

Keel: The main center-line structural member running fore and aft along the bottom of a ship. In wooden vessels it is composed of pieces of timber as long as can be obtained, scarfed together at their ends.

Keelson: A fore-and-aft centerline girder extending from stem to stern post and located either above or between the floor plates in order to prevent tripping or for-and-aft movements.

Leeboard: A plate or frame of planks lowered over the lee side of a shallow-draft boat with a flat bottom. It lessens the leeway when the boat is sailing close-hauled, by giving increased lateral resistance.

Lining: The light wood covering generally of tongue and groove boarding applied on the vessel's sides in cabins and staterooms.

Lug sail: A four-sided sail, bent to a yard, and slung to the mast in a fore-and-aft position.

Motor sailer: Term used to denote in general all craft provided with dual means of propulsion, i.e., sails and motor. It ranges through the entire category from a sailing vessel with little mechanical power to a motor vessel with small sail area.

Open boat: An undecked boat.

Out haul: The rope for hauling out the clew of a boom sail.

Points-of-sail: Sailing points may be defined as the different course followed by any craft under sail when compared to the direction of the wind.

Pointu: The names "pointu" and "raifiau" are given locally in the District of Toulon to small boats with sharp stern used by fishermen and boatmen around the harbor and roadstead.

Radeau: Eighteenth and nineteenth century use: French Louisiana term for large rectangular cargo and passenger carrying flatboat with blunt bow and stern.

Ribs: The timbers that form the skeleton of a boat.

Rounded Bow: A bow in which the waterline at stem forms a comparatively obtuse angle. Also called bluff bow, bold bow, broad bow, full bow.

Rudder crosshead: An athwartship metal piece bolted and keyed to the top of the rudder head, to which the links of the steering gear are secured.

Rudder stock: That part of the rudder which acts as a vertical shaft through which the turning force of the steering gear is transmitted to the rudder body.

Running gaff: A gaff in which the forward or inner end is fitted with jaws which partly encircle the mast and are confined to it by a parrel which allows the spar to slide up and down the mast. It is hoisted by the throat and peak halyards.

Scarf: A joint by which the ends of two structural pieces of timber are united to form a continuous piece.

Sea-strainer: A straining mechanism use to filter out debris in salt or fresh water prior to their entry into ship's machinery.

Skiff: Equivalent to French term esquiff in twentieth century use. Eighteenth century use: large, flat bottomed boat used on the Mississippi River if the bow, or bow and stern, were pointed.

Stem: The upright post or bar of the bow. It may be a casting, forging, or weldment, or made of wood.

Stiffeners: Sections or shapes used for increasing the rigidity of plating.

Throat halyard block: The block through which the rope hooked to the jaws of a gaff is hoisted.

Tiller: A heavy bar or lever with one end bored to fit on the rudder stock enabling the rudder to be turned by hand.

Timbers: This is a collective term applied to the various members employed in the building of a vessel, such as beams, ribs, floors, etc.

Tongue-and-groove: A kind of joint in which a tongue or rib of one board fits precisely into the groove in another.

Yard: A long cylindrical spar, tapering towards the ends, used for supporting and extending a square, lanteen, or lugsail.

APPENDIX 2

TRANSCRIPTS OF ORAL INTERVIEWS

(see Table 2, pp. 14-17, for a
chronological list of all interviews)

M/V Fox, March 14, 1984, Tape 001, Capt. Earl Cantrelle, Larose, Louisiana.

A: I remember riding right around that area, I remember riding, un, I can't remember the name of that boat though. Uh, had a hurricane coming and they came down there and got us off the intracoastal there. I'm talking about the late 30s. I was a very young boy at that time and I remember being excited about riding that boat and it was one of those two-three cylinder jobs. And the old man's name was Lefort, L-E-F-O-R-T, but he's passed on since, but there's one of his sons that's still living around in this area. My mother'd remember the name of that boat, I'm gonna ask her tomorrow.

Q: O.K. The Fox, Captain?

A: Possibly, but I believe that Fox is probably run by Aymars or Harang. One of the very early people over here.

M/V Fox, March 15, 1984, Tape 001, 065-080, Mr. Wilkerson Guidry.

Q: Can you think of any old people in town who might remember that boat, the Fox? That I might could talk to?

A: No, the only thing I know about it, I saw it on the way to New Orleans. That's all I see. I don't know who made it, I don't know who waited for it, or nothing like that.

Q: Did you see any others that looked like it, that were built like it?

A: I saw some of them from Texas, come down here with "bateau a voiles."

Q: Sail boats.

A: Sail boats.

Q: With pointu les deux bouts?

A: With point deux.

Q: But what kind of boat would you call that?

A: Bateau pointu les deux bouts, 'bout the only thing I know.

Q: Yeah, this old man, Tomplait, who's always playing cards over there, you think he would tell me about it? He'll talk, I know he'll talk to me, but...

A: Irvin Tomplait? Maybe, he does, maybe, he maybe a little older than me.

M/V Fox, March 15, 1984, Tape #001, Side A, 370-390, Wilkerson Guidry.

A: Oh, the Fox!

Q: The Fox, yeah.

A: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah!

Q: Would you....

A: That's a hundred years old.

Q: Well, do you have another name for it? Call it "renard," or what?

A: No, the Fox.

Q: Somebody told me that there was a big Fox and a little Fox.

A: Well, that's the little Fox I imagine.

Q: Yeah.

A: That used to be, belong to, old man Aymar.

Q: Yeah. The one who died, huh?

A: Yeah, and then they got the other, his son there, but he's nearly died too. Oh, but the old man was sharp.

Q: Really?

A: He was a, he was a engineer.

Q: They told me that he had a metal lathe over there, and everything.

A: He had lathes, and he had all kind of stuff, he could, he could do anything, that old man, when he was a lil' bit younger.

Q: Why that boat sat on the bank so for so long?

A: Uhh, ain't had nobody to go pump it.

Q: Do you remember it ever being in the water?

A: Uh, yeah.

Q: What they use it for?

A: Used to go bring the people do shopping, and he go cook for 'em. But dat old man, there, used to get permit with the Corps Engineers, to build a house on side of the bayou, or build any kind

of building. Eh, he was a sharp old man.

Q: Uh,huh.

A: Ooooh, that old man was smart. Handwriting, I never see somebody that had as nice handwriting like he had.

Q: I was hoping to ask people around here that might remember it, what years maybe, it was used, what it was used for, stuff like that.

A: Yeah. No, I don't remember the year. I was a little kid. When it was in the water, I was about twenty-one, twenty-two. But before that, I was a little kid, I knew he used to pick up people to go trapping.

Q: He'd bring 'em to there and then they'd stay there, the trappers would stay out all season?

A: They'd stay on the boat.

Q: Oh, they'd stay in the boat?

A: Yeah.

Q: Oh, they'd live in that boat, then? And then run their lines from that boat?

A: Yeah, yah, they was living in her.

Q: Anh.....Did they have cabins too, out there where they were at?

A: Yeah, they had cabins to put their furs in.

Q: Furs, eh?

A: and they sleep in the boat.

Q: How many people would they carry?

A: Oh, they had about, about four or five in there.

M/V Fox, March 15, 1984, Tape001, Side B, 140-429, File Aymar

Interview with Harold Aymar, Present Owner of M/V Fox.

Well the Boat is all right. It got rammed with a barge, and it, the boat, put a hole in it and we had it before we left, the old man and I.

Q: When was that?

A: So long ago, and we pulled up on the shore so on their property.

Q: When did it get pulled up there?

A: Well a few years ago, because the old man was living. But afterwards it got a dirty lick when it was here on the shore, its on the property, ya see, ya see, where ya see that place like a cave-in, that was a cave-in right there. You follow that line, that's what I told the surveyor, you follow the line from that property there and you come straight out just like this, that's the line, ya see, that was the cave-in right there. All that's land behind that little building, that's land behind there, I even got a post put up there, lately. What is your name?

A: Ray Brassieur is my name.

Q: Would you like to take a walk outside, Mr. Aymar?

A: No man (unintelligible) my ankle, my legs hurt me, I have arthritis, (unintelligible) no I can't walk along the water, but I can give you directions where.

Q: Whose boat was that, Mr. Aymar, that boat the Fox?

A: (unintelligible).

Q: We are interested in the history of this boat.

A: Oh, the history, that's all you come for?

Q: That's all.

A: That boat is what you call a bayonne type. We were going to change it, take it out at wharf, wharf was doing much at time. We were going to make about 65 feet to add on. You see that's how they built. That boat was built in the City.

Q: What City?

A: Bayou St. John

Q: Is that in New Orleans?

A: Ya.

Q: When was it built? Do you know?

A: I don't know. More than 50 years.

Q: They tell me it was built sometime around 1895.

A: The old man renewed all the ribs inside.

Q: He renewed all the ribs inside?

A: Oh ya, he's got all cypress ribs now. Ya see that was bayonne type and I think it was a boat that was built along Esplanade near City Park.

Q: Near City Park?

A: Remember when all the yachts used to be tied up there in Bayou St. John? You ain't a man that old.

Q: No sir.

A: You're practically a young man. Well, you got to be more than 50 years old. You could be 65 years old and remember. They took it all away, all that mess, you remember that old boat place it was an Irishman (unintelligible). The whole place was open at that time. The old place was all the way, ya see the Old Basin was there. The New Basin is uptown. Well that's shut up.

Q: The old Basin Canal?

A: Both old and new. And the old one took a long time. It was old, old boy. It was a big long one. That used to be the old Carondelet Canal, it went into Bayou St. John. I know the history as a boy, we used to go out there with the old man. We had a dredge at that time. We take this guy out. Ya see. Then that will carry us up to I think 1905 they open it. So the dredge was working before 1905. Big suction dredge. It was a big fellow. Wood hull at that time, they were going to get a steel hull but they got out of that business. He said it was a dive and then they sold out. Starting selling all his property. He sold all his property. Its practically all sold out. Only the front is not.

Q: What was that boat used for? That old Fox.

A: What was it used for?

Q: Yes sir.

A: It was for people, passengers. It was nice inside. It's not rough. The old man got a nice way for seats, we used to take sick people to town. Anybody who was in a bad fix, you couldn't go to town in this damn parish for hell. In rainy weather, you got as far as that bridge over there, remember that place over there they had a

big establishment, a ballroom, I tell you who's there. Who was that fellows name? He closed up afterwards, by the grocery store. I tell you was there. Pittman. Remember Mr. Pittman.

Q: No sir, I don't remember that.

A: You lived out here, didn't you.

Q: No sir, I didn't live around here.

A: No?

Q: No, I lived a good bit west of here in St. Martinville.

A: Oh, St. Martinville. Does he live here?

Q: He is from New Orleans.

A: I'm from New Orleans virtually. We opened a canal, ya see, this canal. We had boats lined up these fishermen and all kind of fellows to get ice. They had no ice factories here. You couldn't buy hardly anything. John Aymar, John. Remember John. You won't remember John. That was my uncle. He was here for quite a number of years. He kept the canal. That Aymars.

Q: That was your father's brother?

A: Then the Aymars sold out. They sold out to the Harveys. Then Harvey came along and kept it a few years and sold to the U.S. Government. The U.S. Government didn't care much, they wanted to go a lock for it really, to what I know, but somehow or another Harvey, I don't know what he did, to tell you the truth the Harveys' family all got tangled up, you see. It cost them \$90,000 to build a lock at Harvey Canal. \$90,000. Everybody around here, all these people said they did have an old time lock built I guess during the, they call it the red time, that was the old Confederates, remember, they did all kinds of things. It was a wooden lock like Westwego has. You ought to remember Westwego. They closed that up. We used to use Westwego all the time. It was only \$1 for a boat to go through. We didn't charge much, I believe \$1 for a boat. Now you talk about the history of that boat. That boat was built in Bayou St. John. She was built. She is all cypress in all. Always had cypress planks, till the old man put all cypress in there. And it was good inside I hate to say because she got rammed. But that boat is good. I am going to have it fixed, you know, with a plank put in it, just a plank in the side. That boat had a nice, my old man fixed it up, it had a nice railing for passengers, you know, but he put a cabin in the back, ya see that's the bayonne type. They got boats at the Chef, you know the Chef Menteur and the Chef. I guess you know how to speak French. You must know Chef Menteur. I know of them because I went to school. And I speak out of the book. And that's OK. There was a man came here from the ward(?), all he wanted is that concrete, I used to rent this out to a barber. You remember that barber, you been on the bayou.

Q: Not to much, I'm not too familiar with the bayou over here.

A: Oh, you're not familiar with the bayou.

Q: No sir.

Q: What was your dad's name Mr. Aymar?

A: Ormand R. Aymar. The old man was an Englishman.

Q: Oh?

A: Oh ya, he talked funny my old man.

Q: Was he born in England?

A: I'll tell you my story of them. They owned a great big plantation on the river. In, what's that parish now, that parish is coming up just like Thibodeaux. Did you know Thibodeaux has the biggest power plant than your damned New Orleans is got? I lived in New Orleans all my life. In the other case, they sold, my sister died and my brother died, ya see. Not long, a couple of months back. And I'm here, where I am going to go? I got all this property up in the front, all up in the front over a little place in the back, I'm selling it out fast. Not up here because I'm here. That's how come I thought you were from the Parish or something like that. But you're just a on-looker for that boat. That boat is a nice boat, that's a bayonne type. That boat draws about three feet of water.

Q: When that boat was new, do you think it had the cabin in the back of it?

A: Oh no. My old man put that. It was a nice open, it can be taken off if a man ever wanted to. Its nice. We built that cabin. He built it out of cypress. He put his time toward it. He was man who could do everything. He was a construction engineer.

Q: When do you think he rebuilt that boat?

A: When he bought it.

Q: Was it before WWII?

A: His sold his brother half and half was turned over to him. Ya see. Afterwards. He bought it afterward he got a hold of it. All that registration business, you know how that goes. That boat is about over 40 feet long, about 47 feet long. He took off a little bit because he changed the bow stem, you see. That is a cypress bow stem. Rodrigue put that on, that used to be a shipyard. Walsh put that on. A new bow stem. A new bow stem.

Q: Is he still living?

A: He's dead..

Q: He's dead now?

A: In fact that shop is closed up. Ya see. (Pointing) There, that place. Everybody looks at and they don't understand it. You go in the City at the West End you will see boats like that. Some of them about that size, some of them 65 feet. That's a bayonne type. Ya See. Bayonne. I believe the French people make them. Ya see, well I'll tell you one thing, but we were going to make it square for handling, you see. Because the old man used to get toying with that boat. He had a couple of engines in there. Plus you had a Fox. Then he took that out and put a Regal. He has a Regal in there now.

Q: That's a 1905 Regal?

A: A big Regal. Brand new, it has a new crank and everything.

Q: He put it in there new?

A: Practically new. He bought it from, I'll tell you, he bought Mr. Barker. Not this Barker, that's the son. That fellow used to be a hard worker at one time. You see Barker worked for the steamboats. He used to run steamboats in here. A Government man told me, I spoke to him, you could see he was in the government he was a Colonel or something. He said listen, he said brother, I knew he was a Colonel, I been in the service, you see. I said let me tell you something, you are going to see the steamboats coming back with the wheels, big wheels. He said now your talking. I don't know, the gasoline is looking bad. They used to take coal oil you could get for nine cents a gallon. My uncle sold coal oil. People were crazy, now they got gas. They found gas out here way down in those gas wells. There might be more gas while they go for, I think they gonna do something, I don't know what they doing, but they coming through that land right there, they are gonna bore for something. Because they are all ready, they got money to bore. They go down deep enough. I know, my old man put the pole down in different places and you could see it bubbling up. My old man, my father said that's gas. If they would go, just like somebody said, just one man in the legislature. The legislature is different. Are you a Edwards man? Edwards for Governor?

Q: I am for whoever helps us. Whoever can help us, that's who I am for.

A: Well of course. I'll tell ya, let me tell you something, brother, I don't give a god damn cause I'm American; I've been in the service. I've been in the Army. That man, that Republican you got, I don't know who is going to make it, but I'll tell you brother I'm too old to go to war, the war wouldn't take me. Its good for me to talk to you.

Q: You have a visitor.

A: Jesus, somebody else.

Q: Tell me what kind of engine was before that Regal?

A: That boat has a Fox engine on it.

Q: Was that a steam or diesel engine?

A: They had no diesel at that time.

Q: It was a steam engine?

A: No. Oh no. It was gasoline. That time the gasoline was so strong that man, if you put it near heat the bottle or the can would blow up. She ran gasoline. And she, the old man had all kind of things, besides, and he had hot air put on.

Q: Where did he go to buy gasoline?

A: That engine was bought somewhere in the City.

Q: I mean the gasoline to run it. Where did he go buy it?

A: My uncle sold gasoline. Had gasoline shipped out on steamboats on the barge. Not on the steamboat but on the barge, remember Barker, Alex Barker, that was around the first year. There was a fortune in freight. We used to run for towing. We used to get plenty business towing, you see. And passengers. It was a passenger boat.

Q: Where do the passengers go?

A: I could run passengers cause I got license.

Q: Where did the passengers go to? Did they go from New Orleans down here?

A: No. It got wrecked up in here. You see they ran barges, it got wrecked.

Q: I mean the passengers you used to haul.

A: Oh ya, from down here. Sick people who wanted to go to the hospital. They couldn't go by road or automobile, the roads were horrible. You got as far as across the canal, we'll say about two or three blocks, you got stuck.

Q: And they go the hospital in New Orleans?

A: No. Ya. New Orleans. We had no hospitals out here. We have a hospital in Houma right now.

Q: In New Orleans what hospital did you bring em to?

A: The Charity. It was little. It wasn't even big. Now that Charity Hospital, that used to be the New Orleans gas plant was there. Put up by an Englishman, too. They made gas. Artificial gas. Out of coal. Now, did you see in the Gazette, in the paper, well, they put it in Gazette, take it from me. New Orleans has got only one stack. They got two, they going to have two sets of boilers. They might have four sets. Because sometimes I can't get the power to run some of these ice boxes, there's too many people pulling. Aren't you some kind of a mechanic? Or a man who knows something about electricity?

Q: Not too much.

A: Well, they don't have enough power. You see, they put a transformer by that gas line, they going to run that gas pipe under the bayou. The United State's Engineers. I believe they're here yet.

Q: How many passengers would that boat carry?

A: That boat could take 30 passengers.

Q: 30 passengers?

A: Yes sir, they had life preservers. And also we used to take a skiff. But the life preservers did. We had to have 30 life preservers for inspection. My old man always carried and I always will take plenty life preservers. All these boats had to have life preservers for regulations.

Q: Did y'all ever carry mail on that boat?

A: No. Never did. They can do the haul with a buggy, and if a buggy got stuck, too bad, they couldn't make it. But they can... they used to have them in the boats. That was furnished by the Government from Lockport. A train ran to Lockport, that's twelve miles from here. In the mud and bad weather. But the little buggies could carry the mail, ya see. And they only went to the cut off, how they got mail further on, I don't know. But that's long years ago.

Q: Did ya ever go to Manila Village with that boat there?

A: I should say so. We went to Manila Village. I know all about the lake. They got a nice cut off now. The government has a canal, you go straight. But you had to know your business to go into Catahoula, Bay Catahoula, its a small bay, and then those two points, Morris (?) Point's on one side, and Grosse Point's on, I think, that side.

Q: Did ya go to Manila Village and carry passengers?

A: Ya, you have to go Manila Village to Bayou Perot, its still open.

Q: But what did you do down there?

A: We used to, oh it used to be a regular fishing village. I'll tell ya. They had, there used to be canning company there. They used to can shrimp. Mostly oysters. It was owned by that Manila Village I believe Fisher had something to do with it. In New Orleans on Magazine, I was a boy, his boy went to school with me. When I was going to school.

Q: Where did you go to school?

A: When we went to school in the City, well some people they had....

Q: But where did you go to school?

A: Whoa, when did I go to school?

Q: Where did you go to school?

A: Oh my god. I went to McDonnough 7 and I went to, you know where McDonnough 7 is, Milan and that's Coliseum Street. Because that's Chestnut, I believe they bought more land. Wasn't that way when I went to school. We were crowded. But, they had the school belonged to Jefferson, the old Jefferson school. It only went to the 4th grade. Way up on Baronne Street. I'll tell you about New Orleans. I know all about New Orleans. When I went to school, brother, that was sixty years ago.

Q: Now as far as the Fox there, did y'all ever carry anything but passengers?

A: Well, we used to tow barges. We could tow with it. Yes, we could. She was well built. We renewed it all the time. Old man took her out. He's a man who believed in cypress. Her deck was all cypress. It was a nice boat.

Q: How fast would it go? Do you remember?

A: Well, you could say, I don't know how many miles we didn't have no, not to fast but fast enough but as fast as those oyster boats.

Q: How long was the trip from here to New Orleans? How long did it take?

A: Well let me see. You got good eighteen miles of lake. We had to go into the lake then. Now they have a short cut, you go short. You had to know your onions to go on the lake, otherwise you'd get on the shell bar. They sucked all that out, you see, for shells. They got some low places, they got some bad, bad, bad cypress trees that used to be there.

AD-A150 858

EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY OF THE
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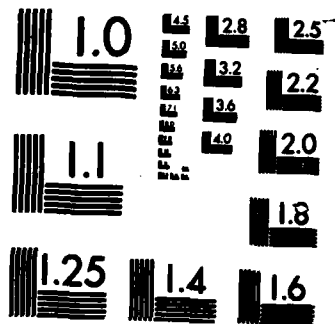
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MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

Q: Could you go over there in the day time?

A: They cut all the oak trees down, live oaks they get that big, you know what live oaks are. They used to be pretty. The point came out from, that's where the Aymars used the dredge.

Q: On that trip from here to New Orleans, could y'all make that in one day?

A: It went into the lake. This canal went into Lake Salvador.

Q: But how long did it take?

A: Eight miles to the lake.

Q: How much time, how long did it take?

A: A good boat, we sometime, the old man would turn the carburator, we'd make it in about four miles, four hours.

Q: Four hours over there?

A: Ya, look you got eighteen miles, then you got Bayou Barataria. And you got another bayou to go up, then you got the Harvey Canal. It wasn't so deep. When you got to the real Harvey Canal, you go to the locks. They had a locks. Now the government's got a bigger locks now. They took all that stuff out, made of bricks. The Harveys had a brickyard. They used to make bricks. And that was all over the locks. But the new locks when Harvey put em, new locks must cost em, must of put'em in the mess, \$99,000.00 now that's some money.

Q: Mr. Aymar...

A: But my old man know them. We were familiar with Mr. Harvey, Horace Harvey, Capt. Harvey. He had steamboats. They used to be, they had all that land in the back, they used to sell cross ties. One brother, that was Horace Harvey.

Q: Mr. Aymar we gonna have to go.

A: Well I want to talk. You come back again.

Q: We gonna come back and talk. Thank you very much.

A: Well listen, I'm telling you information. That boat used to make 4 1/2 miles, ya see. That's pretty good. And he used to get all the business from passengers, people were sick. How would you go to town now, you know they ain't got no bus out here. The Greyhound shut up, you know why brother, they all got automobiles. They used to come to my old man used to be in the shop, you see, well, Capt., we want a doctor, Doctor (?) has a great big house across the lake, get Doctor (?). I could tell you a lot of stuff.

Q: Okay, we are going to come back and talk to you.

END OF INTERVIEW

M/V Fox, March 16, 1984, Tape 001, Side B, 455-463, Mr. Tony Ougel.

Q: It's funny, it's pointed on both ends. Do you know of any other boats around here, pointed on both ends?

A: No, that's the only one that..., it was built, I'm sure, sometime after... sometime after the Civil War, when the old man put it in better shape than it is. He's telling me about it.

Q: But it wasn't built like that?

A: You know it was pointed at both ends, but I believe they used to haul, uh, by mules, used to haul. They had a big mare, say I believe they had a big mare. They used to pull it by mules, you know, with them big ropes.

M/V Fox, March 16, 1984, Tape 001, Side B, 497-554, Mr. Tony Ougel

A: Every once in a while I go out there, but I can't stay too long, cause he rattles off, he rattles. He's telling me he's gonna rebuild the Fox and go get cypress logs.

Q: Doesn't he have an old parts, old boat parts?

A: No, that's baloney, that's all rumours, that's all bar baloney! I went through that, the kids had went through all over in there, so he asked me to go and nail all those windows and stuff. The only thing he had that sort of looked like something, was the 1934 Pierce Arrow. All the rest is just junk. If you want to go take a look, I can take. Any time anybody comes, its all right, we can go on in. He has all kinds of old machinery, old gears, old, rotten, rotten, you know.

Q: But there's not many people that remember seeing that Fox operating?

A: No, no. Matter of fact I tell you when the old man had a, when his mind was sharper than that, the old man used to tell me about it, they used to haul people to Thibodaux. That was before cars, before, you know, the first roads were dirt roads, they had a horse and buggy, horse and buggy to travel. And he used to tell me that they, you see, first of all, they, uh, used to haul it by mules, then that big mast they had up front was for a sail, and then they built, you can see, that the nails are square, and whenever they used square nails that was in sometime, around the Civil War and after, and he was telling me they would go towards Lake Salvador a ways. But in them days, you know that was a ways. They had seats and all that for passengers.

Q: He said it would carry thirty passengers, that thing, thirty, boy.

A: I imagine, yeah. But you could see the seats.

M/V Fox, March 20, 1984, Tape 002, Side A, 040-070, Bill Oberhelmann

A: ...part is not finished. Just on the right, like if you're gonna go to Esplanade Bridge, and turn, all there on the right. Look, do that some time. See, you know what I mean. Right on down, you have to stop for the light, then begin to look, on the right side and you'll see where all that is unfinished, not like the other side of the bayou. That was because they couldn't get title to it right away, they finally got title to it afterwards. But if you could dig that up, I understand that was in the family for years and years, way back in the early early 1800s. That's the way I understand it was.

Q: How long had the shipyards been run down on Bayou St. John?

A: Oh, way before my time, oh, my lord, yeah, way back, I understand in the early 1800s. And you see, further back, uh, see Bayou St. John was a navigable stream, and then when they made that turn by, you know how they made that turn down by City Park, it was called the Old Basin then. Some Old Basin Canal Company dug it later on from that and it come in behind the auditorium.

Q: Do you remember what kind of boats they used to build?

A: Oh, oh, regular, like if you wanted a nice boat built, pleasure yachts and all that, and maybe, a small tugboat, or something like that, too.

Q: Did they build boats, steamboats?

A: No, no, no, no.

Q: No steamboats, gasoline?

A: Yeah, in other words, the Basin wasn't deep enough, you see. Just pleasure boats, and skiffs, and something like that, like light fishing boats that draw light water.

Q: Have you ever heard of anything called the Bayonne boat?

A: Well, I don't recall that...

Q: That's that shape that we got.

A: Oh, yeah. Well that was supposed to have been built there, too, wasn't it? There was so many, plenty of them down there.

Q: Who were some of the other shipbuilders down there?

A: Oh, I know there were others. You know why I knew so much about that, 'cause right there, where, you see where Park-Esplanade is there? Well, right there that was an old country store-trading

post, see? And the fishermen and all would come right there on Thursdays, see. You can see an old water trough, did you ever notice that water trough there? That used to be for the horses...

Q: Oh.

A: I think it's still there, right there. I think they built around it. Well then, they used to come there on Thursdays. And see, as a boy, my daddy, we would catch the car and go out there, and buy nice fresh fish. See, maybe there'd be three, four boats down on Thursday. See the fishermen used to come down there.

Q: This is a picture of the area, and it says Dupuys' Boatworks are down here in this corner.

A: This is the Bayou. Now this must be Carrolton Avenue, see, down there. I'm sure there was, Dupuys' Boats, yeah.

Q: And, it says that the Vista Shores Country Club is located today nearby that.

A: Well, Vista Shores, that's what they called City Park, isn't that, well yeah.

Q: About how big was the shipyard down there?

A: Well, I could say, I could imagine they could build about two, three boats at a time, you know, like those fishing boats, and that way, because afterwards, when they got, they never did finish that part, but you can see the part that's unfinished. And part of there, where they widened out, you know when you go across, and go like go down. Part of that was their property, too, but then they widened it out and made some street out of it. That's why that neutral ground is not so wide, but it used to be way wide there, you see.

Q: Did they make any boats for commercial purposes?

A: Oh, no, no. Just those fishermen. Yeah, they did. The depth of the Bayou St. John wouldn't allow that.

Q: But small commercial vessels?

A: Yeah, yeah, right, small commercial fishermen, it only drew maybe, you know, three, four or five feet of water, you see, that way, yeah. It used to be a nice section in there. I always had hopes they'd come along and improve, fix it up like the rest, you know, but they never have. You see the unfinished part there. That, it went up a pretty good piece, with a turn, like you'd go up and come up this way to the Bayou, you know. You see that Bayou, the Bayou stops right there by, uh, oh, just above Dumaine Street, in front of, you know where McMahon Coburn, the undertaker, well their front, just above them the Bayou stops. They can drain that Bayou too, you know? There's a big floodgate right up at the end.

I've seen where they've cleaned it out, two three times. Just open that up, and then put the damn out at the Lakefront, see, and in two days or so, it's all mushy and you see all this trash. Oh, one time, the first time they opened it up, oh, my God, they must have been two months getting all the old rubber tires out, the tin buckets and cans, and everything else dumped in there all the way.

Q: How long did Dupuys' shipyards operate down there?

A: Oh, closed down after that, whenever the WPA time was. I don't know what time that was. It was there. My daddy said it was there in the early 1800s. Yeah.

Q: They first were operating in the early 1800s?

A: Yeah.

Q: What stopped the shipbuilding activity on Bayou St. John?

A: Well, the closing of the Canal up by Bayou St. John and all of that stuff, you see. They closed, they put the locks up out there, too, you see. Once they talked about closing it, filling it, the people raised so much cane, that they didn't. You see right there by the old railroad, just beyond where you cross over the Esplanade, down there you know where the old railroad bridge is, well, right down as you go to the Lake on the right side, there used to be an old sawmill there. In fact they are still in business. They moved out, what do they call it? I forget the name of that now. They were a big sawmill. For years, they had a big, about the biggest piece of cypress timber I ever seen, it stood there for years and years. It was about four foot in circumference. Big thing! And then finally the Black housing project come in and they had to sell to them, and finally, I used to go out there and get weather boardings for our houses, cypress weather boardings. Course them buggers charged plenty money, their price was always high. And so I went out there one day, and the man said, "Hoo!" I said, "What happened around here?" He said, "Well, you know, we finally had to sell out to the housing project and you know," and I said "Oh." "Where's the big log?" "Oh," he said, "We cut that up. We finally bulldozed it and got it back here in the sawmill." They had to pull it back about two blocks. Cut it all up.

Q: About how many men did the shipyard employ? Do you know?

A: Oh, I don't know. I wouldn't know that.

Q: Dupuy was French, wasn't he?

A: Oh, yeah, yeah. The way I was told, it went way back. Way back in the early 1800s when the, and that was a Spanish grant, that's what I understood it was. A Spanish grant to those fellows grandpa or something else. They had it for years and years.

Q: And the family just kept on doing shipbuilding there?

A: Yeah, until they closed them out in the end, you see. Then when they finally settled it well, WPA like I said before, WPA had landscaped all the Bayou, all around, but they didn't do anything to that, 'cause they didn't get the title, the State didn't get the title to it till it was too late. Yeah. You see that, that old, as you go along the Bayou, and come, you know, like you're coming towards Dumaine Street, you see that old bridge there? You might have seen that old bridge. Well, that, they used to turn that. See, by hand. Done that for a long time. Then that was a vehicle bridge, but it got bad and the City, they couldn't repair it. So they got it blocked but you can walk across it, it's stationary now, you see? They're talking about doing something about Esplanade Bridge, I read an article too, right there. Fixing that.

Q: The builders that they employed by the shipyard, do you know, whether they were also French, or Acadians?

A: Oh, I don't know, none of that, no.

Q: So you never knew anyone who worked there?

A: Oh, no. I didn't know that. I was always so sorry that they didn't finish the whole thing, you know, make it look nice all the way. You talk about something that was beautiful, you know on the side where Park Esplanade is, when you go down, that used to be the old Confederate soldiers' home there. You pass there now, I forget what's in it. The police, the police got the emergency unit, when you look down the line of oak trees, well they had a beautiful old home down there, you see. And then the old soldiers built, like a pavilion, built out into the Bayou, just a short piece, just a shed on it and benches, you know, and they'd come out there in the nice weather and sit down. And then, when the race track was open, everyday when you'd pass there about twelve-thirty, there was, the ones that could walk around, would have on their Confederate suit. And they would, there was a short cut everyone don't know about it, but you can go out Esplanade to one of them streets, and cut behind the cemetery and you come right into the entrance to the racetrack. They'd let them in there, and they'd go to the races, and they'd look so nice and dressed up. You know, oh. Then finally it dwindled down to, to a man and his wife. And then after they died, they tore the house down, tore the pavilion down. And then the state took it over. I always said to my mother, "I wish I had money, I'd like to buy a house on Bayou St. John." Oh, they were always so nice, my goodness! You seen that old house there that belongs to the church, huh, on the Bayou. You've seen that, didn't you? You know, on that side of the bayou. Yeah.

Q: You say you know about how many shipyards that were located on the Bayou?

A: Oh, no. The only one I know was that one. I didn't know much, 'cause you see the roads wasn't good or anything to get out there.

I remember one time, my mother was living, we decided to come from on that side of Bayou St. John, you see, where the lumber yard was. Boy, oh boy! We almost got stuck. Oh, the roads was bad. She wanted to go in there and try it. I swear, I said, "Never again!"

Q: So they basically, mostly built boats for yachts that were used out on the Lake.

A: Yeah, yeah. Them fellows that done fishing, made a living out of fishing, you see. Oh, no, they couldn't take a, like a schooner or something else, you know. A big schooner or a big steamboat that run across to Mandeville, or Madisonville, or that stuff. Yeah.

Q: But they did build gasoline engine boats?

A: I guess they repaired, they repaired a lot of these small sailboats you know, that the fellows had out at the yacht club, too.

Q: Do you know anything about where they got their supplies from? The lumber...

A: Louisiana. Oh, Louisiana cypress, sure, and Louisiana oak, oh, sure, yeah. Right here in Louisiana.

Q: Do you know, down in Barataria area, or where they ...

A: Oh, there's so much cypress, oh, down where you, well, you went down there. Over in that St. Bernard place, there.

Q: When did they build that first Charity Hospital, Bill?

A: Oh, I don't know, it was way before my time. Oh yeah.

Q: Do you remember an Irishman who made boats? Over on Bayou St. John, over there?

A: No, if he did so from Esplanade on out, I didn't know much, no.

Q: The Basin Canal, it was along Esplanade near City Park?

A: You see, the Old Basin, you see, when they got up to a certain point where it would stop now, from that end it was called the Old Basin, 'cause that was one of the first ones built.

Q: Yeah. What about the old Carondelet Canal? Do you know anything about that?

A: I'm looking now, let's see.

Q: They said that it went into Bayou St. John.

A: Well, maybe that's what they called it, and they have changed

it to the Old Basin. It was something similar right there, I guess that was what that was, Carondelet Canal. Way back, I guess that was the name first given it, way back in the seventeenth century, or something. Then the Old Basin.

Q: And they used to have to dredge it out, dredge out the Canal.

A: Once in a while, yeah.

Q: Do you remember, do you know anything about the building of locks on Harvey Canal?

A: No, you mean entrance to the river. No, that was before my time.

Q: Yeah, but I just wanted to know whether you knew anything about that.

A: The only thing I know about, if they'd ever dredge Harvey Canal, Ah, boy, they'd get some cypress logs down there, oh, my God!

Q: You said they also do shipbuilding now up on Chef Menteur, up near Chef Menteur.

A: Yeah, that's right. You never went there? You know, you keep right on down Chef Menteur. And you know where the junction is where you go out to Powers Junction. Well just keep straight down. Oh, Halter. Halter Marine, you ought to see that down there, yeah, yeah, that's right. That's a big outfit.

Q: You know anything about ship engines?

A: Oh, no. I could bring somebody around here to tell you about the latest ship, modern ship engines.

Q: No, old ones. Like from around 1900.

A: Oh, that old one that I was on, when I got on it, 1917, it was 25 years old then.

Q: What kind of engine was that?

A: What, Randy, what they call that old engine?

Q: Steam turbines?

A: Steam turbines, like that. Yeah, that's right, that old ship I was on. And you know what I remember? When we got to the Suez Canal, you know how hot it gets down there, it got so hot that all the heads got hot, and they had to get the pumps on and keep pumping water on it, on top, it was so hot. And then they had the bilge pumps working to pump the water out. Oh, my God. They not only leak, but it was so hot, they had to use some kind of water or something to cool the engine off. Oh, it was 130, you could go

around just in your shorts, cause, you couldn't wear them shoes, you had to have a pair of slippers, those shoes feel like they were 20 pounds a piece. Let me go over there by them kids.

END OF INTERVIEW

M/V Fox, March 21, 1984, Tape 002, Side B, 108 - 129, Capt. Earl Cantrelle and Wilkerson Guidry.

Cantrelle: You remember the name of the other one?

Guidry: No. In them days, they didn't have no names, no.

Cantrelle: Not down here. They never did give a boat a name. But right now you gotta have one if you have a boat yourself.

Guidry: Yeah. Yeah, you gotta register that son of a gun. In them days you didn't have to do nothing.

Cantrelle: Do you remember riding, coming, do you remember when we used to live, when we used to live by the lake?

Guidry: Yeah.

Cantrelle: They had a bad hurricane coming? And Mr. Lefort brought us to Larose.

Guidry: He had an upright IHT.

Cantrelle: Yeah.

Guidry: You crank that son of a gun from behind.

Cantrelle: Yeah. I thought it was a Lathrop.

Guidry: No, it was a IHT.

Cantrelle: Yeah, probably put one afterwards. But I remember that, and uh, it wasn't quite the same type of boat. It was a square stern.

Guidry: That's the oldest one that I know on the Bayou.

Cantrelle: Yeah.

Q: Were there any other boats that you know of that are built, what, pointu les deux bouts?

Cantrelle: Pointu les deux bouts.

Guidry: Ohhhh. Yeah, they got some of that sailboats, pointu les deux bouts. But probably they new.

Q: But only sailboats?

Guidry: Yeah, yeah.

M/V FOX, MARCH 21, 1984, TAPE 002, SIDE B, 130 - 505, Louis Cheramie

A: The only thing you use a boat, once in a while, they go, the old man, that's the only time I know he went to the city, when I went with him. Besides that, once in the while, he went for some permits. Down the Bayou. See, his daddy had most all the permits down the Bayou.

Q: Did they build in it?

A: To build the Bayou some walls. On the Bayou side. And that's when the road is too bad, some dirt roads, he had a Model T besides that. A model T. One time, one time, he came in here one time, a guy from Chicago. He say, "I hear you have a Model T." "Yeah," I say, "It's a Model T in the cabinet. And the Model T still runs." That's about six years ago. I sure liked that Model T. I say, "Pardner, you can't get that Model T with that old man."

Q: That old man won't sell anything, huh?

A: I say you can offer him a thousand dollars, you can offer ten thousand dollars. He ain't gonna sell it to you. That's what I know about that old man. He ain't gonna sell nothing. Now you can go, if you want, but I say I'm not gonna go. But a couple of, last year the VFW they want to try to buy this lot, I should have had that lot, there. Because that old man, before he died, he wants to sell me that. Surprisingly.

Q: Is that right?

A: I had the money, and I didn't make a pass. He died, the old man. After that, you can't buy it today.

Q: What is Mr. Aymar's name, his first name. Do you remember?

A: Ormand was the old man.

Q: Yes, Ormand was the old man.

Cantrelle: Johnny, what's his name, I can't remember his name. I know his brother was Johnny.

A: Yeah.

Cantrelle: Cause I sold some coffee with him.

A: Johnny and Buddy. Johnny and Buddy.

Cantrelle: I can't remember any of those names. I used to know them.

Q: Mr. Cheramie, you want to go sit down someplace and talk about this boat with us? I'd like to ask you a few questions myself, me.

A: Okay. That's good.

A: I was running a boat once. The old man. The boat was wrecked. And the company gave me everything the boat. ...see I carry a bunch of cast nets. I got everything good, eh. A mincing machine and everything. So that's all right. So his daddy, the captain there, give me a cast net, and gonna give me, oh, man, the clean jack and red snapper. I knew where I'm gonna get it, you know. He fished, he put it in the yard, and the boat's still rotten. Drive it into the yard.

Q: Mr. Cheramie, your first name is Louis?

A: Louis Cheramie.

Q: Louis Cheramie. But they call you Pepe?

A: Yeah.

Q: When they start calling you that?

A: When I was about fifty years old. I'll die old. I'm no baby!

Q: When you were about fifteen?

A: 'Bout fifty.

Q: Fifty. When you were fifty.

C: Yeah. But they been calling me Bebe. If you come to the Rosie and you asked for Louis Cheramie, I don't believe, you can ask for Louis Cheramie all 'dem guys there, they all known by Bebe. I just go by the name Cheramie.

Q: Yeah. When were you born? What year were you born?

A: 1904.

Q: 1904. You are about eighty, then?

A: I make 80 the sixth of June.

Q: Sixth of June?

A: Sixth of June comes.

Q: Sixth of June comes, then you make 80. And you rode, you remember riding on that boat?

A: Yeah.

Q: On the Fox?

A: Many times around here.

Q: Many times on the Bayou.

A: On the Bayou, but one time to the city.

Q: And one time you went to New Orleans?

A: Yah.

Q: Did you help on the boat, or did you just ride it?

A: Oh, I just ride. I was a young kid then. I musta be like maybe fifteen, fourteen years old

Q: Fourteen or fifteen years old.

A: Probably 'bought then.

Q: And when you went to New Orleans, how did you go? Which route did it take?

C: Oh, went to Lake Salvador.

A: Went to Lake Salvador?

A: Yeah, they move in the coast at that time.

Q: You went out this canal?

A: Yeah, this canal.

Q: And that was called Harang Canal?

A: Harang Canal and Harvey Number Two. Usually Harvey Number Two.

Q: Harvey Number Two?

A: Yeah.

Q: Harang Canal and the same thing is called Harvey Number Two down here?

A: Yeah. That's the people that make the canal. I guess they used that boat when they make that canal. But that was before my time, though.

Q: The Aymars made the Canal, didn't they?

A: Yeah.

Q: And you figure they used that boat when they made that canal?

A: Yah, they had to of rode that boat there.

Q: And they used that boat to run back and forth to New Orleans?

A: He must have went to New Orleans, but that's the onliest time that I know that I went to New Orleans.

Q: So, the boat may have gone any number of times, but you only rode there once?

A: Oh, yeah, oh, yeah.

Q: So when you get to Lake Salvador, then what? You cross the Lake, and how'd you get into the city?

A: Right through the Harvey Number One. The other end.

Q: Through the Harvey Canal.

A: Harvey Canal, yeah. Onto the locks.

Q: Then you went through the Locks, and then, and then...

A: We didn't go through the Locks. We stopped at the Canal.

Q: Oh, you stopped at Harvey. And you didn't go all the way through the locks to the river.

A: No, at that time, that was ...

Q: Okay. And what did they do when you got up there? Were they buying supplies or delivering people? Or what were they doing?

A: Oh, the old man had his family over there. That's why...

Q: He had his family! That's right! This man told me that he went to school there.

A: Yeah. He had his daughter and another son. Most of the other times, once in a while, Jack comes down most all the time with his dad. But the young one, most of the time, he stays with his sister. Because they had a place right there, about the same jaunt in time as everything go, yeah. Like they had this place here. They tell me how one guy come here with that, but at the same thing, they had a place in town.

Q: Okay. How long did you stay in there? How long did you stay over?

A: Oh, yeah, I didn't come back, maybe we stay two, three days. And then I came back with them. But I can't tell you how...

Q: Two, three days. When they went up there, how many other people went with them?

A: Just me and my brother.

Q: Just you and your brother?

A: And two kids, he had two kids.

Q: And his two kids? And old Ormand Aymar?

A: Yeah, the old man.

Q: Not John, but Ormand?

A: The old man and the two young, his kids.

Q: And then when you came back, how many people came back?

A: Was the same coming back.

Q: Was the same going and coming?

A: Yeah.

Q: So it was really just a visit, more or less?

A: Umh?

Q: Did they buy a lot of stuff up there and bring it back?

A: No, they didn't got much. They didn't buy no stuff. He might have bring some of his stuff, the old man, but ...

Q: How long do you recollect it took to make the trip from here to Harvey?

A: 'Bout six hours, I guess. The boat didn't go so fast.

Q: How fast do you think it went?

A: Maybe thirty-five miles, we make about five, six miles an hour, or something like that. Oh, we didn't make very good time.

Q: Okay. So it took about six hours to get up there. And you ran the engines all the way?

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you ever remember that boat not having engines?

A: No.

Q: It always had the engines?

A: All I know.

Q: Do you ever remember it having a big mast for a sail?

A: Oh, they had all different kind of machines for sail. She can't go to the shore.

Q: No, no sail on it?

A: No.

Q: Do you ever remember it being, la cordelle?

A: No.

Q: Never, not that boat?

A: Because, of course I was a young kid then. I don't remember, but I was a lot different. We lived about three miles from here. We stayed at Ludevine. It had a big sawmill, and a sugar mill, and everything.

Q: What was the name of it?

A: Ludevine.

Q: Ludevine?

A: Yeah.

Q: And that's where you lived?

A: That's where I was born.

Q: That's where you were born.

A: Now Larose, Larose didn't have much. This town, over here, just had this house here, and that church.

Q: Holy Rosary Church. Now he told me that his uncle, John, sold ice here.

A: I don't remember him solding us that ice, coffee for years.

Q: Coffee.

A: Coffee.

Q: They didn't, they didn't, from what I understand they didn't make the ice here. But they'd get ice. They'd go get ice and then bring it back and sell it.

A: They had to go get ice at Lockport.

Q: At Lockport?

A: No ice on the Bayou. Because we had typhoid fever. My daddy, we had to have ice. Can't help you go on a horse ride. Get some people to go to Lockport. No cars could go on the road.

Q: So he would go up to Lockport and get the ice and bring it down here. Where's that book? It's kind of dark in here, but I want to show you a picture. You'll have to adjust your eyes. Uh, see that picture there on page 58? You think that's the same boat, the Fox? See, there's the Holy Rosary Church. And there's a boat that looks alot like it. Is that the way you remember that boat?

A: That may be the same. It looks like the same.

Q: Looks like the same boat? Same boat?

A: Yeah. Pointed at both ends.

Q: Pointu les deux bouts.

A: That's the only boat that I heard that type. I still run bayous.

Q: That's the only one you've seen that had the pointu les deux bout?

A: Pointu les deuxs bout. That's the onliest ones I, that could be the boat.

Q: Unique.

A: Yeah. And it had a cabin all along.

Q: Well, see, on this picture here, the cabin is different than the one that's on there now.

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: They say the old man changed the cabin on it. That at first they had this long wheelhouse and cabin here. But then he moved it back a little and he had little deck there. Do you remember when he did that, when he changed the uh?

A: Yeah, I remember the carpentry work.

Q: You remember the carpentry work?

A: Yeah, there's people that, uh, a man, here, Manual Orgeron. He's the one, an old man used to...

Q: Who's that?

A: Orgeron. He's dead now.

Q: Orgeron?

A: Yeah.

Q: Orgeron:

A: Man. They called him Man Orgeron.

Q: Man? Manuel.

A: Man Orgeron. He was uh....

Q: O-R-G-E-R-O-N?

A: ...was that kind of work for the old man.

Q: He worked for Ormand Aymar. And they called him Man Orgeron. And he did the carpentry work?

A: That must be him. Because at that time, he was older than me. And he used to work there.

Q: So you think that is the same boat?

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: 'Cause you never saw another one parked over here? Now, now look here, this is down the bayou a little bit from the church, which is right there behind us.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: So that's down the bayou a little bit from the church. But now the boat's on the bank up here. What do you suppose the boat was doing parked down there on the other side of the church?

A: Well, he could be over there. The boat could be over there. Because that some wharf, that's some wharf over there.

Q: So they had a wharf right there? And the boat was at the wharf there. What happened at that wharf? What did they do there?

A: You know what that came to be? They had a man, they had a man what fixed the boats on the other side of bayou there. How you call that? Ah. Walsh Rodrigue.

Q: Mr. Rodrigue. He had a place there?

A: Oh, yeah, he had a ...

Q: A shipyard, a warehouse?

A: He had a warehouse. He had a weights. And he put both on the weighs and he's the onliest man we had around here, someplace for

the fish boats. It can be him.

Q: Right by the church. So his place was across the bayou from where the boat is now, but there was a wharf on this side of the bayou?

A: Yeah, they had a wharf over there, and they had a little sawmill over there too.

Cantrelle: That was old Luke, uh...

A: Luke Breaux.

Q: Down by Luke Breaux's sawmill there.

A: That can be that, because that almost is.

Q: Right about there?

A: Yeah.

Q: Well, then, who lived in this house here? Was that part of the church there?

A: Yeah, the church house.

Q: The church house?

A: Correct.

Q: And was this the sawmill right here, this big building or what?

A: That was a movie house.

Q: That was a movie house?

A: Yeah.

Cantrelle: That's where I had my reception when I got married. That old house. That used to be a theater.

A: Yeah, all that was tearing down. That house, and that, theater, all that.

Cantrelle: It's all gone.

A: It didn't have much. Didn't have much of that town built around here then. Ain't got much houses built around here.

Q: Mr. Cheramie, Mr. Aymar that lives next door to here, the old man that lives in the shack here?

A: The old man, no, no.

Q: Not Ormand, but his son. His son, he still lives in that shack next door here?

A: Yeah, that's, but, he used to live over there.

Q: He used to live over there?

A: And the house burned over there.

Q: And the house burned?

A: That old house, it burned on the inside, and he wants to go live over there back, but they put him in here.

Q: They tell me that a barge rammed that boat, the Fox, and that's why they pulled it up on the bank? Do you remember that?

A: I don't believe. Because that boat was on the bank, but, uh, they have much boats tied that time. That boat was in the bayou. And they pulled that boat, oh, that boat might be there for last fifty years.

Q: So you don't think it got rammed, you think they just pulled it up there because at the time, they didn't have too many boats down the bayou?

A: No.. That boat there was pulled out, I guarantee that, fifty years ago.

Q: And so you think it was pulled there at least fifty years ago? So you were about thirty when it got pulled up there?

A: Around that, yeah. I guarantee, it must have been around 45 or 50 years ago that the boat was pulled out.

Q: They tell me that boat was built in New Orleans in Bayou St. John. Do you think that's true?

A: That could be true.

Q: You think so?

A: That could be true.

Q: Why do you think that?

A: Well, they, at that time there, they don't build no boats here.

Q: At that time, they weren't building any boats down here?

A: At that time, they had nobody build boats here. Just an old man there with And that's the onliest man around here. There's no shipyards, no, nowhere around here to build boats.

Q: So it had to have been built someplace else?

A: It had to be built I guess, New Orleans or somewhere.

Q: They told me on Bayou St. John.

A: Could be.

Q: He also called it a bayonne type, did you ever hear that type of boat? Bayonne type.

A: No.

Q: They told me that the old man renewed all the ribs inside the boat?

A: Well, most all the time he had somebody to work. You take rotten out, and build it up again, the old man. Just like I did that. Repair something.

Q: So, they worked on it continuously?

A: Just what I said. The old man hasn't been sure he'll get work. I'm gonna have that boat built. Real boat. I'm gonna go and trawl and make some money. In that boat. The same boat. Sold it to them. For a cast net. Because the company had told me that you can't repair that boat. That boat's a total loss. He gave me the boat to get him out the water, you see. So I said myself, what the hell I'm gonna do with that boat?

Q: And what boat was this?

A: That's the boat that's right now in the yard there. Not the same kind of boat like that. There's another boat.

Q: Another boat? And it got hit by a barge.

A: Yeah, he's the one that got hit by a barge.

Q: That's probably what he's remembering.

A: That's the one got hit by a barge.

Q: The round boat in the yard, got hit by a barge.

A: Because that boat there, I'm the one that kept it, because I knew when I'm gonna let him have it. He's nuts. But oh, that's the one I want, the one there. They just panicked.

Q: And that was your boat, and?

A: That was my boat, they had, the company had given it to me.

Q: So the company had given it to you, and you sold it for a cast

net?

A: Just for a cast net. And I made a good hull. But I could have repaired the hull. But they did it to me. I took the boat to have the engine and everything in the boat. All the tools and everything, see they had the contract to build the canal. From Larose to Lockport. And I am the one who runned the boat. Where the boat got hit, in front of my house. I was there behind it now. About a half a mile.

Q: Let's see. It said here, the old man told us that he used to take people to the hospital when somebody got sick. Exactly what he said, anybody who was in a bad fix, you couldn't go to town in this damn parish for hell. So he said, you got as far as that bridge over there. He said that the only way to get to town, to New Orleans, to Charity Hospital, was in that boat. Did you ever remember them taking anybody to the hospital in that boat. Did you ever hear of that?

A: That must be before I come to Larose. As I have tell you, I was rather small then. When I come to Larose, I was about nine years old. I was living in Ludevine. Larose, they had nothing in this town. Just the church and the two, three houses. Not many more. And they had that bridge, there. Right here. Turned by hand, that bridge.

Q: They had a hand-cranked bridge right there?

A: Hand-cranked bridge. That's what they had here. The first time I came here, me, was when they had the crevasse, when they making the dam.

Q: When was that?

A: Oh, that was about 19...

Q: I didn't hear you.

A: About 1909, 1910.

Q: Around 1909, 1910?

A: That's the first time I come to Larose. We had convicts make that dam.

Q: They had the convicts build the dam? Where'd the convicts come from?

A: From, uh, from Thibodaux.

Q: From Thibodaux. And they made a dam right here?

A: Yeah.

Q: After the crevasse here in 1909. And before that they had a hand-cranked bridge that went across the Bayou right there?

A: Oh, yeah, yeah. That's the, they used to turn that bridge.

Q: Hmm. Do you think he might have brought people to the hospital, but early.

A: Early, yeah.

Q: But early, yeah.

A: But probably all I know after I was here, and I went with them was just that they want to go to their family over there.

Q: The way he told me, he wasn't very clear. He said, "anybody who is in a bad fix, you couldn't go to town in this damn parish for hell. You got as far as that bridge over there. Remember that place over there, they had a big settlement, a ballroom. I'll tell you who was there. Who was that fellow's name, had a grocery store. Pittman".

A: That might be.

Q: Pittman. Where you think that is? You got as far, when you left here, you got as far as that bridge over there, and they had big settlement and a ballroom. And they had a guy who had a store named Pittman. Where do you think that was?

Q: That was on the way to New Orleans from here?

A: Oh, that, there, then the first bridge they had, the bridge that was there at Harvey. That was the only bridge.

Q: The bridge at Harvey was the only one?

A: The only one. They had a ferry there, at Barataria, to cross, uh, the Barataria, they had to have that bridge there, well they had a ferry at that time.

Q: At Barataria? So that would have been at Barataria then, eh?

A: At Barataria. He must have meant he would come all the way to Harvey. They had to used to stop there. You see, they didn't go through the locks. They stopped there. Because I brought that, another boat, I brought one of my cousins what shot himself, and another boat and his boat. And they had a lumberyard. See, the lumberyard. So, that is go there to Harvey and call the ambulance. That the only place you can unload them people. Now if they went with their boat there, I don't know.

Q: He said the Aymars had a big plantation on the river. Do you know where that would have been?

A: That must be before his time. That may have. That must be. I tell you all they did. Then Aymar, they may have some people in Larose. Those Aymar, and that _____ Aymar has still here is the land. Just land. Was too crazy. I could have bought it from, from where, thirty acres, of land, that boy had, for twelve-hundred dollars. His daddy used to buy up the land, the man'd make a fortune of it. He could buy that land for one-hundred dollars a lot.

Q: Do you want to go over and take a look at that boat with me?

A: Yeah.

Q: Let's walk over and take a look boat, there.

A: After the old man died, could have buyed that for maybe two, three thousand dollars. From, all that.

Q: All of it, the whole corner?

A: I told him, I'm gonna give you the whole lot, seven hundred dollars. He say, you can have it. He say, make me an offer, hear.

A: That thing here was, had a, just a, just like I say, a cabin and all that, and all that. And he had that Orgeron here, the one that make all them cabins with him.

Q: Mr. Cheramie, I did a drawing of the boat. Did it look something like this, the way you remember it, before the roof had collapsed? See, there's the cabin there.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did it look like, This is the same one that I showed you in the picture in that book, though, you're pretty sure of that, eh?

A: Oh, sure. That's the same one. That's the onliest one there.

Q: So, and you rode on this, you were about...?

A: Maybe twelve, fourteen years old.

Q: Maybe twelve, fourteen years old. So that would be around, huh, well let's see. You were born in 1904, so that would have been about 1916, 1917.

A: About.

Q: Before the first World War?

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: Before the first World War. Okay. And when you rode on it, where did you ride? Did you ride in the wheelhouse, or?

A: I rode all over the boat.

Q: All over the boat.

A: They had a wheelhouse, and they had a little cabinet down there.

Q: They told me he had nice seats in that cabin, it was real comfortable.

A: Oh, yeah. He had all that fixed up, all down there. Yeah, looks like the same boat, me. It was pointed at both ends.

Q: You recognize that big mast sticking up there?

A: Yeah, he had a mast in front.

Q: That was a tow mast?

A: That guy, that mast, it's just a thing of some boats. He had a little mast in front.

Q: But not for a sail?

A: Oh, no, no.

Q: Just to tie lines to, and what not. I see. Yeah.

Q: Do they have a little galley or anything on this thing? A little kitchen?

A: Yeah, he had a little kitchen. That thing picked up good. You see them things there?

Q: Yeah.

A: That's on the cushion on there.

Q: He told me that they sometimes took as many as thirty people on this boat. Do you believe that?

A: No. It's like I tell you, if he took them thirty people, he's a lot younger than me. That's before me. And, uh. Oh, that boat could haul thirty people. But it won't go in there through the lake with thirty people.

Q: But not through the Lake?

A: That's one job, winding through the Lake. That's the onliest way in them days that can go New Orleans, through the Lake.

Q: He said his uncle John sold ice and so forth right in here. Do you think that's true, he had a little place here that kept ice,

he'd go to Lockport and get the ice, and bring it down here and sell it?

A: Oh, no, I don't recall that.

Q: You don't recall that, huh?

A: Only thing is, now you can get ice from every corner. If he was going to sell some ice there, eh, cause we need some ice. I was about thirteen years old. And had to go to Lockport. Had no ice in the road. Get some ice.

Q: What else can you remember about this boat? Can you remember any details that may be gone now? Can you remember anything they did to this boat?

A: The only thing I guess I have told you is the boat, there, How old are you, Joe?

Joe Guidry: Thirty-six.

A: Thirty-six. When you were old enough to remember, that boat there was there.

Joe Guidry: Oh, yeah.

A: Oh, yeah.

Joe Guidry: oh, yeah.

A: Besides that, that boat must have been out for the last fifty years. Really.

A: He (Joe Guidry) says he(unintelligible).

Q: They got who?

Joe Guidry: My daddy and my uncle, and another man, they....

A: They dig that thing...

Q: They dug the bank out?

Q: They dug the bank out? To put the boat?

Joe Guidry: And my daddy's 65, going on 66. He was a young man.

Q: Does he still live around here?

Joe Guidry: Oh, yeah. My daddy lives in the back there.

Q: Is that right? I'd like to talk to him.

A: Yeah, that boat has been there for fifty years.

Q: What was his name?

Joe Guidry: Wilclif Guidry. He lives right next door to that old store, down the back. He would like to talk to y'all about it. He told me that the other day. I guarantee.

Q: Do you think we should write his address down? Or his phone number so we call him?

Joe Guidry: Mais, I can call you from here, while you're here. He'll see you in the back.

Q: What's his first name?

Joe Guidry: Wilcliff. W-I-L-C-L-I-F-F. I believe what Mr. Cheramie said. It must be fifty years that boat was...

A: Oh, yeah, fifty years or more.

A: That boat there, he had all different kinds of weight.

Q: Had different kind of what?

A: To pull that boat, to pull that boat out, it must have take, maybe, fifteen or twenty days.

Q: Fifteen or twenty days?

A: They took a little bit at a time.

Q: They winched it up?

A: Yeah.

Q: They winched it up, and it took a long time to get it this far?

A: They were pulling there, fix up that boat, and go and trawl and everything with it. And they have the boat blocked. Same thing like that boat there, I told you I sold for that cast net over there.

Q: I don't think we can get in there to take a look at that boat, huh?

A: Yeah, you can see from the fence.

Q: You can see it from the fence?

A: That old man got all different kinds of machines. That old man, he wanted to come and live in back in here. Well, it's all rotten down.

Q: It's all rotten down?

A: That's a part of the boat..

Q: That's a part of it in there under that truck? That's a truck in there now. But it's on...

A: It's some part of the boat. That's the keel of the boat.

Q: That's the keelboard right there, huh?

A: Well, plenty people come down, take the big parts. That would be the boat.

Q: Yep. And that's the one the barge rammed?

A: That's the one the barge rammed. People come down there, tear up everything. But that's the keel there. I remember, I have them to bring the boat inside. And that old man, that living in the back, he's got machines you don't even know exist. But you can't... one of my grandsons from Baton Rouge that came here once, he say, I like to go and see this old Model T. And we come here. They have some boots. Have water up to about half of my leg. So, the old man and I left the....

Q: Do you think there are other people around who remember riding on that boat?

A: Oh, all them people that ride around on that boat, they all die. I'm the onliest one left.

Q: Really? Hey, you know where this fellow Wilcliff Guidry lives?

A: Just over there.

Q: Joe says he has a big cypress tree in his front yard, and he's right next to this old brown store down here. Which side of the road is he on?

A: Right over there. On the right hand side. Right here. We can drive behine this store.

M/V FOX, MARCH 21, 1984, TAPE003, SIDE A, Wilcliff Guidry & Louis Cheramie

(Introductions)

Guidry: Get some chairs over there. You sit down.

Guidry: Where y'all from?

Q: New Orleans.

Q: Yes. See we're down here working on a history of this little boat there, pulled up on the bank, there, the Fox.

Guidry: Oh, the Fox.

Q: Yeah, and we ran into your son over there, and he said that you and your brother dug, uh, the bank out, to pull the Fox up.

Guidry: A dollar a day!

Q: A dollar a day.

Guidry: That's right.

Cheramie: I told him, that, oh, it's around fifty years old.

Guidry: Ohh, Lord, yes.

Cheramie: Maybe more than that.

Guidry: That's old. But I was young, and I was married. And I got a son 45 years old. When I dug for that.

Q: So how long ago, how old are you now?

Guidry: I'm 65.

Q: 65. And how old were you when you dug that?

Guidry: Oh, about 16, something like that.

Q: 16. Okay. So its been about fifty years...

Guidry: And that boat was there before, oh, long before I remember.

Q: But it wasn't up on the bank?

Guidry: No.

Q: And old man Ormand Aymar...

Guidry: Aymar was paying us to take this dirt with a bucket, me and my brother, with a, by hand, you know. Take the dirt and carry it away, so we could bring the boat closer to the bank.

Q: So you dug out the bank so he could pull it up?

Guidry: Pulled it back the boat.

Q: Were you there when they pulled the boat up?

Guidry: No, no I wasn't there. When they pulled it up.

Q: Did they, do you think they winched it up or did they just pull it up by hand?

Guidry: They, uh, I guess they, pulled that by hand or maybe they had a truck.

Cheramie: I thought they had a winch.

Guidry: A winch or something.

Cheramie: You're a younger man than I am. Man was the head man there, when they pulled.

Guidry: Man was the man that pulled it up.

Cheramie: That was what I told him.

Q: Orgeron, Man Orgeron?

Cheramie: That was the man that did construction for the old man. Every once in a while he'd get Man to do some carpentry on the boat.

Q: Uh, huh. So you remember old man Aymar?

Guidry: Oh, yeah, Ormand.

Q: Ormand Aymar.

Guidry: Yep.

Q: Was he, uh, a bigger character than his son who still lives in that shack over there?

Guidry: Oh, yes. A smart guy.

Q: Smart guy?

Guidry: Oh, yeah. He used to go take us some measurements to make some docks, for them trawlers down the Bayou.

Guidry: He make a print of it, and he'd do the Coast Guard, he'd get the permit for the dock for them people. He'd charge them so

much for the work and all.

Q: He was a construction engineer?

Guidry: Yeah. He was an engineer, that's what the old man was.

Q: And he was the only one down here that knew how to get the permits to do that?

Guidry: Oh, yeah, he was the only one that knew how to get it with the Coast Guard. And the Corps of Engineers.

Cheramie: He was so smart.

Guidry: We'd go over there, we'd go with him, me and my brother sometimes, my brother and I.

Q: Which brother was that?

Guidry: Wilkerson Guidry. And, uh, he'd go there with the tape line, have the old man measure it and everything, for the permit for the dock, you know.

Q: And that boat, once they pulled it up, they never did any thing more with it?

Guidry: That's all they did. They pulled it up. It's been there since then. But to tell you when they pulled it up, I don't remember.

Q: Well, close enough, 'cause you were about 16 when they dug it out. They must have done it right after you dug it out, huh?

Guidry: No, no, it stayed a while in the water.

Q: It did?

Guidry: Oh, yeah. It stood there a while.

Q: A year, or two years?

Guidry: Maybe more than that.

Cheramie: Over sixty years, over fifty years that boat is on, up here. Over sixty years.

Q: Did you ever ride on it? On the boat?

Guidry: No, I never did.

Q: Mr. Cheramie rode on it.

Guidry: Yeah, Cheramie must have rode on it.

Cheramie: I used to go down the Bayou once in a while when the weather's too bad to take the roads.

Q: Is that it?

Guidry: Yeah, that's the boat.

Q: That's it, huh?

Guidry: Oh, yeah.

Cheramie: That's the onliest boat that's point on both ends that I know on the Bayou.

Q: Pointu les deux bouts.

Guidry: Pointu les deux bouts. That's right. That's the only one I can think around here.

Guidry: Look at the old church.

Q: That was before they redid it. They tell me that they redid it in 1931, so and if that boat's been up there fifty, that had to be the early, early 1900s when that picture was taken. And that's the only one pointu les deux bout that you saw.

Guidry: Yeah, that's the only one! That's the one.

Q: They said it was built up on Bayou St. John, in New Orleans. Do you know anything about that?

Guidry: Bayou St. John.

Q: Do you know anything about that?

Guidry: That old man there thought the world about that boat.

Q: He did, huh?

Guidry: Ohhh, you couldn't have bought that boat for no kind of money.

Cheramie: Tell about the Fox.

Guidry: Well the Fox...

Q: Did everybody down here call it the Fox?

Cheramie: Oh, I've heard all the time about the Fox.

Guidry: The Fox, the Fox, yeah.

Q: So, as long as you remember, that's what it was called?

Cheremie: Yeah, at one time, I'm gonna tell you that, went they go down the Bayou for some permit, that time they were running the Model T. The old man was cooking. His daddy, not him. He say, "Well, I don't like to go eat in restaurants." He say, "And I know what I eat." He'd fix the rice, and the rice was just as dark as the meat. Say, "What you go in the other pot?" He say, "Possum."

Q: Possum. You know who told me he loved to eat possum, was Tomplait, Mr. Tomplait. He said he loved to eat possum and he cooked it with the skin on it. They didn't skin it.

Guidry: He'd eat that aligator too, because I brought him some already. You know, we used to work for the old man, cut grass and all, you know? It was hard to make a dime in those days, and no work around here. You know what he'd do. He'd give us a dollar a day and you'd go cut grass with it. In that place, in that jungle, where you see that jungle. That's where he was living there.

Q: Do you remember his brother too, John Aymar.

Guidry: John Aymar, yeah.

Q: They told me that he used to go get ice, and then sell ice over here. Do you ever remember him selling ice over there?

Guidry: Johnny?

Q: Yeah.

Guidry: Used to have a service station right on the corner.

Q: Do you think he sold ice in that service station?

Guidry: Yeah, he sold ice there. That's where my brother-in-law was working.

Q: Your brother-in-law was working there?

Guidry: For Johnny, yeah. He was, my brother-in-law was brother-in-law with Johnny.

Q: No kidding?

Guidry: Yeah.

Q: No kidding.

Guidry: Johnny was married to my brother-in-law's sister.

Q: What was her name? Her family name.

Guidry: Loupe. He was married to a Loupe, Johnny Aymar?

Q: And, remember what kind of gas he sold, or?

Guidry: That I don't know. But I remember John Aymar, right down on the corner, when that road was going through to open that bridge, that turn table bridge...

Q: Hand crank?

Guidry: Yeah, hand crank. You remember that, Louis.

Q: When'd they tear that bridge up?

Guidry: Oh, they tore that bridge up in, uh, 19 and 30s.

Q: In the 30s? In the 30s. Cap'n, do you know Earl Cantrelle?

Guidry: Yeah.

Q: Earl Cantrelle. I used to work with him. That's how I met Mr. Cheramie. Capt. Earl brought me to meet Mr. Cheramie. But, he said about 1939, 1938, somewhere in there, he was living out on the lake. And they had a hurricane. And they had to go get him, a man named Lefort. I guess he had a boat and he went out and got the family, and they brought him up here to stay during the hurricane, when he was a little baby, when he was a little boy.

Guidry: They were living by the Lake?

Q: Yeah, and they said this Mr. Lefort had a boat that was kind of like that...

Guidry: Lefort.

Q: Lefort, Lefort.

Guidry: He had a IHT in there, yeah. One of them tall one cylinder motors, you had to put guidelines on it. And you could leave from here and go to the Lake where he went to get them people with a quart of gas and come back.

Q: Quart of gas, huh?

Guidry: That's right.

Q: Well, the gas was better then?

Guidry: No, it was a penny to a gallon.

Q: And better gas too. Stronger, a lot higher octane.

Cheramie: I heard that gas is gonna be a whole lot on the gallon again.

Q: Yep. So, do you remember Mr. Lefort's boat pretty good then?

Guidry: Oh, I rode in it. We used to trap one year, me and him.

Q: Was it like that Fox, was it built like the Fox?

Guidry: No, it had a square back.

Q: It had a square back, it wasn't pointu les deux bouts?

Guidry: No, it wasn't pointu les deux bouts.

Guidry: We had a cabin all alone. I know I rode from here to go to...

Q: And that picture in the book is not Mr. Lefort's boat, it is the Fox.

Guidry: That's the Fox. Oh, yeah, guaranteed that's the Fox.

Q: Okay. And Mr. Aymar, the one who lives in the shack over there, told me that they carried just mostly passengers in that boat. And, but Mr. Cheramie remembers going to New Orleans, and when he went to New Orleans, he only went with Aymar, Ormand Aymar, and his two children.

Cheramie: And my brother.

Q: And his brother. But Mr. Aymar who lives over there in that shack told me that sometimes that boat would carry up to thirty people.

Guidry: Now I don't remember that, me. No, that was before my time.

Cheramie: That's right, and I believe its before his time, too. The old man might have tell him about it. Because you see that, they were living people up there before I was born, them Aymars.

Guidry: That old man, when he first came here, I don't know what year he come here, but he brought that boat. And that old boat, the Harang Canal, the Aymars built that.

Cheramie: They must have used that boat there for when they built that Canal.

Q: And when he was building these docks and so forth down the Bayou and so on, and the wharfs, that he would get the permits for, he'd go back and forth down there in that boat?

Cheramie: If the road was too bad, that the Model T, there was dirt roads. He went in that boat.

Guidry: He went in that boat.

Cheramie: When they rode to school, they had the Model T. I went

with him in the Model T. Plenty times.

Guidry: Model T, Model A Fords.

Cheramie: And now the boat. I went in the boat around here plenty times. Around here.

Q: You think he ever carried any goods or lumber in that boat, or only just passengers?

Guidry: He probably did from New Orleans.

Cheramie: Yes, some things that he need.

Q: When he...

Guidry: Because that's the way the transportation is to go to New Orleans. In that boat. And if he had some stuff to bring back, lumber or whatever, he brought that stuff in the boat.

Q: Mr. Aymar told me an interesting thing. He said, "we used to take sick people to town. Anybody who was in a bad fix, you couldn't go to town in this damn parish for hell."

Cheramie: Well, you had mud roads.

Q: He said you'd get as far as the bridge. That was it.

Guidry: When I was young, to go to Marrero from here, with a Model T Ford, you'd have to get up at midnight to get started to go. And you'd have to go from Luling along the river to get over there. Then you had from here to Raceland that was mud road. Then above Lockport, they had a guy that would keep that hole, and put water in it. He'd pull you out of that hole when you'd get stuck. He'd put water in it before you get stuck. So he'd pull you out with them mules and charge you fifty cents. He kept that hole in condition till you stayed stuck with that.

Cheramie: You know where the railroad passes that big high wall, there? That's where the high road situated, and the railroad. That was mud road. And then the cars was over here, down on the rivers, five mile on the rivers. Mud roads. I used to go, one time I had a Model T over there. That the coal that comes and gets kids. On the Model T. With the old blacksmith we had around here. We'd run the Model T, Junior, I said, the train is coming. Just the Model T get off the tracks.

Q: About clipped you, huh?

Guidry: Well, at one time they had the gravel along that road there. You'd met a car, pick up a rock, you know how they pick up a rock sometimes, it would come and hit somebody on the eye. In the car.

Q: In the car?

Guidry: Yeah, knock them out!

Q: Uh, were you born here, in Larose?

Guidry: No, in Cutoff.

Q: You were born in Cutoff?

Guidry: But I moved around Larose when I was three months old.

Q: About three months old? So you lived here all your life?

Guidry: All my life.

Q: Mr. Aymar, over there, Aymar, that lives in that shack.

Guidry: Oh, he came out here when his daddy died.

Q: He came out here when his father died?

Guidry: Yeah, he was living in New Orleans.

Q: How long ago was that?

Guidry: I don't remember. Quite a while, eh Bebe?

Cheramie: Yeah. But before that, once in a while he would come and stay with his daddy. And his daddy got sick. That's why the, I was telling you, he wanted to sell me something before he died, the old man. That's why the boy was sold out in the back with something about his daddy.

Q: Mr. Guidry, you wouldn't know what Mr. Aymar's name is, do you? His first name? The one that's alive still?

Guidry: Harold.

Q: And John was his uncle and Ormand was his father? Was he a Frenchman? Was the old man a Frenchman?

Guidry: No, the old man was English.

Q: He was an Englishman. Did he talk funny?

Guidry: Yeah, he didn't talk no French, him. Oh, a few words he'd pick up over the years. He'd understand. But he wouldn't talk French like we did.

Q: Did he have a real English accent, like you might hear on television?

Guidry: Yeah, he talked like he was English, like an Englishman.

Q: Was he born in England, do you think?

Cheramie: I think so.

Q: You think so? And you think he was maybe schooled over there too?

Cheramie: I think he went to school in England. He was smart, very smart man. I tell you that. Boy, that man had a beautiful handwriting.

Q: His handwriting was good? They say his son too has good handwriting, the one that's still alive.

Guidry: You ought to go in that jungle, yeah. In them sheds is junk, and full of old cars.

Q: This guy, Harold Aymar, told me that the boat, the Fox, had been rammed by a barge, and that's why they had to pull it up on the bank. And Mr. Cheramie thought it was another boat he had sold Ormand Aymar that got rammed by a barge. But since they had you digging the bank out there to pull that thing up, maybe you remember why they pulled it up. Did it have a hole in it? Do you remember if it had been rammed?

Guidry: I don't remember. I don't remember it being rammed.

Cheramie: But that time there, I don't believe they had no barge going down the Bayou. That boat is up there since then, they have no oil fields nothing around here, and no barge in the Bayou most likely. That boat got it, that boat is tied long. Once in a while, the only time that I remember, that boat wasn't down.

Guidry: That's around 58, 59 years since we dug it. Right?

Q: Sounds about right.

Guidry: Sixteen years old from 65. Something like that, eh?

Q: Um, huh.

Guidry: I'm gonna be 66 in August. Man, you couldn't find no work. He was giving us a dollar a day.

Q: That seemed like a lot of money?

Guidry: Some weeks, you could pick up a couple of dollars with him. Two, three dollars, something like that, you know? So we could go to the dance on Saturday night. Fifty cents, you could dance all night. You buy half pint of whiskey, moonshine, for 35 cents.

Q: And get into the dance for 50. And you're all set!

Guidry: You're all set! If you make you a couple of bucks, you buy your girlfriend, you was with a girl, you buy them a coke, a nickel a coke, a nickel a bottle, a pack of gum, a nickel. And you'd be fixed up you know? Didn't take much money. You'd get all sweat up man, and dance all night long! For a few cents.

Cheramie: In a hurricane, a hurricane, I was 15 years old. For a dollar a day. I worked in the show. You used to work five days and a half. And on a Sunday I got a dollar a day too. No, no. I was fourteen when I, and I bring the girls to the show. That old pay show. Cost 25 cents to go to the show. Now before that, now I had a job there, learning to drive birds. Delta Farms. Walked about six miles in the marsh for 50 cents a day. Sometime, the kids, oh, let's get a car. Let's go over on the other side of the Bayou. Make me get mad. We had some people who talked like that. And you have to get across, you have to go to church.

Guidry: I worked for fifty cents on that place, on that farm.

Q: Is that right? But you don't remember that boat when they pulled it up, when you dug the bank out there?

Guidry: No, I don't believe they pulled it up right away.

Q: But you don't remember it having a hole in it. It wasn't taking water or anything like that?

Guidry: I don't believe they had no hole in it.

Cheramie: It's just that, I think that it was the one I sold for a cast net. The company told me, you can't hardly buy that boat.

Guidry: The old man wanted to dig that, put that boat on land, he wanted to fix that to go trawl.

Q: He wanted to fix it and make a trawler out of it?

Guidry: Yeah, he wanted to go trawl.

Q: Well, how come he didn't do that? He had that fellow, Man Orgeron, that could do that stuff. Why do you suppose he never got around to it?

Cheramie: In those days you could fix the boat, it could be in good shape now. The boat was made out of good cypress. It had been kept up.

Q: We heard that Ormand....

Guidry: And the old man died and everything went to...

Q: How long has he been dead, the old man?

Guidry: I don't know. It's been quite a while. I could tell you when.

Q: Ten years, fifteen years?

Guidry: Probably more than that, eh? About that.

Cheranie: More than twelve.

Q: Ten or twelve years ago. Where do you suppose they buried him?

Cheranie: I don't know. They...

Guidry: I think they bury him, bring him to New Orleans.

Q: We heard that Ormand replaced the cypress ribs in there, and rebuilt it to make the boat stronger. And when I looked at it there are some old ribs that have square nails that go through them that are rotten, and there are new ribs that are covered in creosote, and have galvanized nails that go into them.

Guidry: Maybe he thought to fix it.

Q: Yeah.

Cheranie: Reinforce it. Put new ribs.

Q: How many years would you guess that the old man, Ormand, used the boat before it finally got beached? How many years did he own it?

Guidry: I'd say probably 45 or 50 years.

Q: Forty-five or 50. It was in use in Bayou Lafourche? What do you suppose. Do you think they ever used it every day, sort of like an every day, day in, day out sort of thing. Do you think it ever had like, what you might call, a regular run?

Guidry: Not that I know of.

Q: So he just used it for his personal use, when he wanted to survey, or make a run up to New Orleans to visit his family, or get supplies?

Guidry: That old man had his wife living, she was living in New Orleans. That old man was living here.

Cheranie: Yeah, that's right, yeah. Oh, yeah. And once in a while, just when he wanted, he took to his family wherever. See, I fished here for three years, and I went to my brother's sister that lived in town. That's why I'd go there and see them.

Q: Can you remember anything else about that boat? You never actually rode on it? Do you remember getting on it when you were a

kid?

Guidry: Oh, yeah, I got on it, yeah! I got on it.

Q: You got on it, but you never rode anywhere?

Guidry: No, you got on and dived in the canal.

Q: When you got on it was it floating or was it on the bottom?

Guidry: It was floating.

Q: Okay, so probably when you pulled it out, it was still floating, he just was getting ready to fix it up?

Guidry: He was going to fix it up.

Q: In other words, it wasn't sinking, it didn't have a hole in it?

Guidry: And he didn't want the boat to hit it. He wanted it moved to the bank.

Q: He was afraid that another boat would hit it.

Guidry: Afraid that some boat would come that night or something, and hit it.

Q: Harold Aymar said it got rammed by a barge, it probably got hit by a barge after it was already on the bank. A barge came in and hit it on the bank?

Guidry: That I don't know.

Q: Because it was afloat when you used to dive off of it. Play on it and stuff. How old were you when you were diving off of it?

Guidry: Ten, twelve years old.

Q: Ten, twelve. Was it fixed up real nice?

Guidry: Oh, yeah. It was nice boat in those days, you know. It was something else, that boat. Pretty. Fine cabin on that. Like a pleasure boat.

Q: Like a pleasure boat?

Guidry: Oh, yeah, it was nice.

Cheramie: It was a nice boat at one time.

Q: It had nice seats and everything? How about the, how about the hull was painted white? Do you remember that, Mr. Cheramie, that it had a white hull? What about the wood, the superstructure up above, the wheelhouse and so forth, was it painted?

Guidry: That was varnished, huh?

Q: That was all varnished?

Guidry: I believe so.

Cheramie: Yeah.

Q: It was varnished. So it was real pretty then?

Cheramie: It was just as nice as any boats they had on the bayou at that time.

Q: That was as nice as any boat on the Bayou at that time?

Guidry: They didn't have too many nice boats on the Bayou.

Q: They tell me that it was made on Bayou St. John. Do you believe that?

Guidry: I think so.

Q: You think so?

Guidry: It couldn't be built here, because they have no shipyards over here.

Cheramie: It wasn't built over here.

Q: It was not built over here. He told me an Irishman built it. But I don't believe that, because I look at that boat and it looks like it might have been built by an Italian or a Frenchman, somebody that built bateau de deux pointe.

Guidry: I wonder why they made two points like that?

Q: They call it, they told me the name of the style is a Bayonne boat. Ever hear that?

Guidry: Uh, uh. Non.

Q: Never heard that before either?

Cheramie: Bayonne?

Guidry: Bayonne?

Q: Bayonne. Must be.

Guidry: French style.

Cheramie: Around there they had the builders, around Bayou St. John, somewhere around there.

Q: Where they had their place, where they lived, or....?

Guidry: Where they have their place in New Orleans, on the Louisiana Avenue?

Q: That's what he told me, something like that.

Guidry: Louisiana Avenue.

Q: But the boatbuilders were supposed to be out near Esplanade, City Park Avenue, out there on Bayou St. John. I don't know, we're going to try and find out. Do you know anybody that has any pictures of that old boat?

Guidry: I sure don't.

Guidry: Who put that boat in the book?

Q: Mayeur. Mr. Mayeur.

Guidry: Mayeur.

Q: Jerome Mayeur. Lives down there, just a couple houses down from Capt. Cantrelle. Couple houses north of Cantrelle.

Guidry: Oh, yeah?

Q: Yeah. I'm gonna go see if he has that picture. Maybe he has another one. You don't know anybody else that might have any old pictures of that boat? No, we're going to write a history of it.

Guidry: A history on the boat?

Q: A history of the boat. We're doing some library work, and looking for old photos, talking to everybody who might have seen it. So, if I can think of anymore questions, I may just stop by and see you again.

Guidry: Okay.

Q: Sure appreciate it. Not too many people know about it.

Cheranie: This will have my name on the research of the boat?

Q: Yes, indeed.

Guidry: I been in two movies already.

Q: What movies were you in?

Guidry: People on the street formed a 75th anniversary, and that eight and a half, show they made about the spring, in 1938. I was in that.

Q: Oh, yeah?

Guidry: Yeah, I was in that show.

Guidry: They had strap, the shrimpers, the trawl. They were selling the shrimp for six dollars a pound. And they had strap, they wanted eight and a half, about. They made that movie about that alligator right on the Intracoastal, that's where the road used to pass in those days.

Q: Gotta come all the way down from the city just to meet a movie star! Let's go see if we can go find some pictures. We sure appreciate it.

M/V Fox, March 22, 1984, Tape 004, Side A, Harold Aynar

Q: How are you today, sir?

A: Oh, how you feel?

Q: Good to see you. I brought some friends to meet you.

A: You got some gentlemen?

Q: Some gentlemen from New Orleans, your home town.

A: From New Orleans, huh? Well, how do you feel? How do you like New Orleans?

Q: Oh, just fine.

A: You see I'm crippled, a little bit. You know, service. That's why it makes me so I can't fix it, can't get nobody to work around here. Nobody wants to work. I never saw anything like it. I bet if I was in the city I get all the people I want.

Q: Naa, not anymore. It's hard to get good help!

A: Huh?

Q: Hard to get good help.

A: Hard to do? How'd I get that way? I was in the service, I broke my leg, four places. Boy, it's a mess in here!

Q: Yeah, I see.

A: Well, I'll get that up, I'll put that in the garbage so quick it'll make your head swim.

Q: We're still over here looking at that boat. We sure like that FOX.

A: You do?

Q: Yeah,

A: Well, I'll tell you, I don't think I'll ever be able to buy one like it. Let me tell you something more about that boat. My old man and myself, I worked, I used to work in the shipyards myself, I know all about work. It had a very old stem on that thing. Cypress. Took the old stem out, 'cause it, broke it.

Q: Did Man Orgeron put that stem in for you?

A: Man Orgeron? Man Orgeron's no ship carpenter. That was done by a ship carpenter and my old man. My old man was an engineer, construction engineer. He could measure, his measurements were

good. He'd cut it out, he had one of those, well I got one of those machines, that'll make circulars, you know. And they cut the cypress out and made that prefit that the pipes had to fit in, you see. They had cypress planks on that boat. And it's pretty inside. I'm gonna make it so whenever I see you again, you won't know it. As soon as I get my leg better. I'm gonna take some strong medicine. I'll forget everything what I'm doing.

Q: Was that the shipbuilder, that guy that fit that stem, was that that shipbuilder right over here?

A: Yeah,a shipyard for repairs, not to build a boat like that.

Q: Yeah, but was that the guy right over here the other side of the Bayou?

A: Right there, you know where the bank is, right across from the bank.

Q: Right.

A: He was a Rodrigue.

Q: He was the only one down here that did anything like that, huh?

A: Well, he was a man about fifty something at that time. My old man was about fifty, when he worked on it. No, less than that. Yes, he was. Well, he didn't do much when he was there, the ship was down, you see. Put planks in her, where she got rammed, you see. A barge hit her. She's about 47 feet long, and she draws about 3 feet of water. And did you see the work in her.

Q: Did the barge hit it when it was already pulled up on the bank?

A: Oh, no. That wasn't on the bank, it was in the water.

Q: It was in the water?

A: Yeah, then it got another lick during a kind of a big storm here, around here. Just on the top. I'll fix that top like nothing. I got all the sails for her.

Q: I talked to this old fellow yesterday named Babe....

A: You want to go see boats like that? You see that size, and you'll see 65 feet long. I think they're called Kotchner. Mr. Kotchner that used to own a jewelry store on Canal Street. I say, owned, or own, one of those boats just like it. There used to be in a boathouse in the Basin. The Basin is closed up now. The New Basin.

Q: The Old Basin? The New Basin is closed up.

A: Do you know where the New Basin was? Do you remember it being closed? Well, she had a boat house, and I used to go out and (unintelligible). Maybe they did. They went out in the Lake in the evening, hot summertime, they took a good time. Says it all. But she'll accomodates about thirty people, but sometimes I could get more of them on the back, you see? I'd take life preservers. My old man used to always take, you gotta have life preservers for every man. You see?

Q: You had that boat registered?

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: With the Coast Guard?

A: Yeah, oh, I had to be. That don't go with the State, those are those little boats that they have the engines in, near shore.

Q: Mr. Aymar, did it have an engine in it when your father first got it, before he put the Fox in it?

A: Oh, yeah. There are none of them running. I know those people. Why the old man used to deal with them. You know with the government they have all kinds of plans to make.

Q: When your father first bought the boat.

A: Oh, when he bought it, well, that's a long time ago. From, she was built on Bayou St. Johns.

Q: Bayou St. John?

A: Yeah,on the land. I guess, that would be you call it, at that time, Esplanade Avenue, the foot of Esplanade. Somewhere along in the Basin.

Q: City Park?

Q: Did that man there that had the shipyard, was that man Dupuy? Did Dupuy make that boat?

A: No, I know all about that. My old man was good friends with Dupuy.

Q: But Dupuy didn't make the boat?

A: I'm sorry, I'm an old man. When he got the boat he put it on a lathe, you see, and it had to be bored for the...

Q: For the propeller shaft? So he had to bore right through the keel? They had to bore through the keel to put the propeller shaft in?

A: Yeah, so he measured, he knew what to do. We had a nigger, that

was a good nigger, he was a nigger though, on the dredge, worked for Aymars. At that time the Aymars had some few pennies to spend, you see? They had the dredge, the deep water running dredge to open that canal. But they kept it a long time, very complex. They got in with some man from the State, they had decent fellows those days from the state, not what they got now. Treen was a good man. And I'll tell you one thing, you boys, and all you, I guess him too, him too, he's a real clever young man. I can tell a young man. I've been in the service. And I used to pick all the certain men out. You better elect, or the whole country, elect this president. President...? What's his name again? It's an easy name. It's an Irish name.

Q: Reagan?

A: He's an actor. He's an old man. But he's a sensible man. Now look, we got a lot of trouble.

Q: Mr. Aymar, when you got that boat up on Bayou St. John, was it planked over, was it....?

A: Oh, it was all topped, it was built.

Q: Ready?

A: Did he have it ready? All my old man did at that time, like this gentleman says, bore a hole through the keel. In the back. And she kicks a big, I've got the rudder inside that, uh, shop. We always kept a big shop. I built a bigger one.

Q: You have the rudder in your shop there?

A: Oh, well, I had the rudder I took it off when we pulled her up.

Q: Sure, you did!

A: I'm gonna make a new one. I'm gonna send for my, my, uh, Ford. I'm gonna hire one. They got a man there, I know him so well, that runs a shipyard so well. He buys all kinds of iron.

Q: Mr. Dupuy did not build that boat?

A: No, he did not.

Q: Who built that boat?

A: A private man, a private fellow that knew something about boatworks.

Q: Did, do you remember his name?

A: I do not know his name. The old man don't know his own neighbor. The only thing is, he was brought up that way. Well, I was too young to know.

Q: Does he ...

A: I was going to school. I wasn't thinking about the war. And I couldn't leave school in the first place.

Q: Was he a Frenchman?

A: Huh?

Q: Was he a Frenchman?

A: Oh, yeah, man. Oh, no, New Orleans. No Frenchman knows anything about that boat. The old man took care of that place. It's nice, I'll tell you one thing, its nice when you back up and its nice when you're going. The idea is not to hold the wave, you know the suction. You know the square boats have swells, and they have a suction to it, you see? That's why, that's why I'll get that money, Well, right now they got that old man, I've got the bolts for him. Big bolts to put in the ribs, you see? We put great big ribs in there.

Q: You creosoted those ribs.

A: All creosoted, course it's older now, and a bunch of weeds are growing in the boat. But, they had a storm here.

Q: Tell me, when you first got the boat, did it have decking on top of it?

A: Hell, yeah. Complete.

Q: Yeah, but you added a cabin?

A: Oh, yeah, the cabin was there. But not a kind of a nice canopy. My old man put that on. It was open. All those boats were open. If you notice them on the Basin, not on the Basin, I'll tell you, there's no more Basin, a New Basin. They got a kind of a boat place now for the boats, New Orleans has. They cost money, for it, you see.

Q: So the boat was moved...

A: You go see those kind of boats. It's a BAYONNE type.

Q: The boat was new when your father bought it then?

A: I saw where in the paper the other day, over the television, where some of the war, our warships, all got that stern. You saw that yourself.

Q: Was it like the Fox. Was it new when your father bought it?

A: That boat was new when he bought it. He had bought it for some

years. He couldn't tell how many years. But not so long, it's more than 40 years, I'll tell you that.

Q: It had a Fox engine, huh?

A: He took it on the lathe, he had machinery here to cut those ribs. Cut the ribs.

Q: So when your father bought it, he had to put in the ribs, and he had to ...

A: No, it was perfect. The ribs were all right. But he just didn't want that, wanted that for carrying, we used to carry machinery...

Q: But it had no engine in it when he got it? He had to put the Fox engine in it?

A: To be truthful with it, the old Fox, that's what they called it, that's why they named it the Fox, it was sitting right there, it wasn't even put on. It worried me. So, I'll tell you, he had that nigger and they had to bore...

Q: Bore the hole for the propeller.

A: Those big boats, and afterwards, years afterwards, I don't know how many engines he put in there, you see. I couldn't tell you how many engines. Now, uh, you gotta Regal in there, they rebuilt, well, it was practically a new Regal. It go bad, and machinery gets rusty overnight, for that matter. And he put double ignition. On the Regal. He had a honey with the Fords. You know those Ford coils? He wore them, oh, electricity, and all that kind of stuff.

Q: Let me ask you something else. Did your father put that little tow mast that's up near the bow, the front, did he put that in the boat too, or was that in the boat already?

A: He put that little what?

Q: You know little stick that sticks up in the bow, it's kind of used for towing? It's a short mast that sticks up right near the front of the boat.

A: Oh, yeah, we put that in. I had a sail and they stole them, broke into my shop and stole them.

Q: So, the boat did have a sail on it?

A: But I'm trying to say, we made the sail.

Q: Oh, you made a sail.

A: A great big sail like they do in Lake Pontchartrain. We used

to, we sailed. From what they call that bridge again? Fisher had it.

Q: You sailed in the Fox then?

A: We sailed from that place clean out to Bay... that Bay there, Barataria.

Q: In the Fox?

A: Oh, no, in that boat we sailed. We didn't use it with, the wind was so good, you see? And I was a boy, I liked to sail. It had a great big boom. Man you oughta see it. The mast is on yet and I have some of the mast in the warehouse. Some of the top that goes on, goes on a hinge.

Q: That's why it's cut cat-a-corner like that.

A: Yeah, that's the mast in the back, you see. That takes us a whole lot of hours.

Q: So you could fold that mast down when you're not sailing, to go under bridges and such not.

A: Now you take it off. Now you don't have to have a mast like that. At that time, all these bridges had to accomodate higher masts.

Q: Mr. Aymar, do you remember what kind of a sail was on there? Was it a gaff rigged sail, or do you remember?

A: It was a, I think it was a cat rig.

Q: A cat rig.

A: You know what a cat rig is?

Q: I know what a cat rig is. Sure.

A: Yeah, you oughta know. Well, they had to have big ropes to hold the sail. And I had to get up there and, and we always had to sail for safety. Well, we had railings on the side. The railings are gone.

Q: You know there's not really a deep keel on that boat.

A: Oh, man, that keel goes, oh, when she sits on the docks, she's that much, she goes out, you know, didn't have to do nothing, but just water keel. He put that

Q: The propeller right?

A: He... That's all. And he knew what to do. Better than some of these here, these people. These people they talk French, you see.

I don't know if you know something about speaking French? Well, he could. He knew all about it to talk to them. Because desperation. He fixed up, well, I don't know what he used, he fixed it all up when she was a sail. You know, when they used to have lug sails out here, they all had one mast, but it was a lug sail. Hard to sail a course, you see. But it was good. They saved money. Now, look at the gasoline Mr. Adams has put the tax on. You and I are gonna pay for gas today.

Q: That's right.

A: I don't know what to do.

Q: Before the engines, Mr. Aymar, how long did your father just sail the Fox, or did he put the engine in right away?

A: Well, he run that boat. They used to go, and they had no way. Listen, not so long that, you know who gave us the roads? Huey Long. He got enough of these kind of days. They had shells, and sometimes, the parish, this parish hocked all the money from the factories. Me too, and the old man, he had plenty land. It run clean to the lake.

Q: And the roads were so bad that you had to use the Fox?

A: Yeah, use the boat. Not only that boat but other boats. People used to go to town on fish boats, on ice boats.

Q: Mr. Aymar, when your father bought the boat, did he put the Fox engine in right away?

A: Oh, no. He didn't buy the engine. The engine was sitting, like I tell this gentleman, sitting, and he had to square down and put the propeller on.

Q: How long did...

A: I tell you, right now, the kind of propeller what that needs...

Q: How long did your father have the boat before he ever put the engine in it?

A: Oh, before they invented the first engine, he ran that old Fox engine after she was screwed down for a good many years, more than any ten years. She was good. I tell you what she was. She was not a "make'n break." I think she was a two cycle. That's all they made in those days. Now all the engines, look, the motorcycles are four cycle now. They used to be hell to start. You remember? You had to have good ignition. My father bought, and his brother too, a regular magneto, you call it a magneto but it's not, its better than a magneto. It's a kind of, I forget the name of it. I'll find it. Long time ago. I got it packed away in one of them buildings. There's a regular generator that furnishes electricity you see, that was for the ignition. He bought a

regular new kind of type for the ignition to go down, you see?

Q: Did they use that boat when they built the canal?

A: Oh, no. We never had it at that time. That boat wasn't even built when the canal was on.

Q: You're sure?

A: They got it afterwards. A couple of years. He had a stern wheel, like they all used to have. You know, those putt-putt-putt little motor things.

Q: Sternwheeler?

A: Yeah. Oh, they had all kind of engines in the sternwheelers. They used to be stationary engines.

Q: So he did not use the Fox when they built the canal?

A: He bought it afterwards.

Q: How many years afterwards?

A: Now that I couldn't tell you. That's so long ago. I never checked up on what they did. But she's not old. She's been, to tell you the truth, she's been remodelled. Like I told you, the ribs are bigger.

Q: Yeah, I saw that.

A: It's got big ribs. If you ever go, I'll get it cleaned out, come back and I'll have it cleaned up. But I just got tired of fooling around with the boat right now. I gotta go do something else. I gotta get a man to help me. And it's hard to get a man to just do work.

Q: Mr. Aymar, you lived in New Orleans with your mother, didn't you?

A: Oh, yeah, he was a construction engineer.

Q: But your mother. She lived in New Orleans, right?

A: Oh, yeah. She's from New Orleans.

Q: Where? You told me you went to McDonough 7, is that right?

A: I went to McDonough 7, afterwards. I went first to Howard. Howard School. You know where Howard School is? On Foucher. That's right.

Q: Foucher.

A: Foucher and Camp Street. That used to be, I'll tell you what that used to be, that property. That was belonging to that big man, they say it was a man in the, oh, what did you call it when you went and played the lottery those days, the big boss of the lottery. He owned that property and he built that school there. He gave that school to the city.

Q: Where did you live in New Orleans?

A: I lived on different streets. First I lived on Constantinople. Then I lived on all up in the Garden District. That's part of the Garden District, you see? And after you go to Napoleon Avenue, we would stop. Now look, they are taking all the parades all the way from Napoleon Avenue because they had to get away from the old cotton factories, you see? On the corner of Calliope Street.

Q: Did you live on Calliope?

A: Oh, no, but they had to take them away from the cotton factories.

Q: Is your first name Harold?

A: Harold is my first name.

Q: How do you spell your last name?

A: A-Y-M-A-R.

Q: A-Y-M-A-R. All these people down here spell it E-Y-M-A-R-D

A: They got, huh! They got Eymards, H E Y M A R D, They got. I never heard of an Aymard. We don't have no "D" to the end. A Y M A R. The old W. H. Aymar is a man that had this property, oh, God, I couldn't, in the eighteen something. And all that property going to the Lake, the Canal, and all that took in. And his boys, his sons, built the dredge. He had two sons. One was a kind of a, well, Mr. Wilton died. He was fifty years old when he died, but the old man lived longer. Then he died.

Q: Now, was that your uncle John who built that canal?

A: No. He was in the city, and he come out here to run it with, for the Aymars. They opened the canal. They had it way before 1940, let me tell you that. Then they opened it in 1905, and then, let me tell a whole lot of stuff your gonna learn. In 1905, and he kept it, I tell you, he sold it in 1909.

Q: To the Harveys?

A: To Harvey outfit. Other people wanted it. I don't know why they sold it, because it brought in good money. It was a toll; you had to pay so much. If I could tell you how much money they made,

man, you'd fall through this floor. But they did. Well, they spent money like everything else. They lived high. They lived on St. Charles Avenue at one time. The Aymars themselves, they had a big family, had eight in the family. I'm one of his sons of the old man's. Mr. Ormand. I am the son of Mr. Ormand.

Q: But, Mr. Ormand, your father was the son of W. H. Aymar?

A: Oh, he was the son of W. H., was it W. H.? Yeah, W. H. William Henry, I think

Q: William Henry Aymar?

A: Yeah, they had the canal. They owned the property, you see? He bought it. I think to tell you the truth I'll give you some history. Like my old man did to tell the government..., he didn't know what they did, but there were still some of the locks there. So, the old, one of the engineers, who's a good engineer, too. And we worked, my old man worked for them. My old man was boss over the gang, when they fixed the bridge.

Q: Now your father was a construction engineer?

A: Yeah, a construction engineer.

Q: But he was English?

A: Oh, well, not him, mostly, he was born here in the United States.

Q: He was born in the States?

A: Yeah, in the States, as my father, was. But his daddy wasn't.

Q: But he talked with an English accent, they say.

A: One of the British possessions. And he talked funny, the old man, you know how the English talk. Like I can't give some of that...

Q: Was W. H. born in England?

A: Oh, oh, his daddy, one of the possessions.

Q: He was born in one of the possessions?

A: I don't know what possessions.

Q: One of the islands, maybe?

A: One of them.

Q: An island, maybe?

A: It could be. I don't know something, was an island. It was some big British possession right close to the, now let's see. I did know this thing. I forgot, I forget, you see, I'm getting, getting, since this trouble. I laid there in the snow, and they came and got me. The army treated me nice, you see? Course I'm getting off the subject. You're interested in the boat. And the canal. They had the canal. Don't go by these people. These goddam Cajuns! You know what, if you called 'em a Cajun, you had a fight. I almost had a fight on my hands! I says get away from that car. We brought all kind of cars here. There was one fellow came in, and he says, "You got any cars?" I said, "No, we sold them all out." Good cars too. They had, I can't begin to tell you what all those things had. We could, I could have run it, and, shit, if I had it now, I could have, I'd have a fortune.

Q: What was your mother's name?

A: My father's name was Ormand R. Aymar.

Q: Your mother?

A: My mother's name was, before she married, was Carrie Fuller, or Caroline Fuller. Her father was a district attorney for the city of New Orleans, two times!

Q: How do you spell that?

A: Fuller, F-U-L-L-E-R.

Q: Okay, good. Good.

A: That was an English name.

Q: How many brothers...?

A: He was from, really, he was from Alabama. And he came down to New Orleans, that's way, way after the Civil War, you see?

Q: How many brothers did you have?

A: Only one. And he's dead. He just died a couple of months ago.

Q: How many sisters?

A: One sister. A smart woman. She was a secretary.

Q: When you were a child, did you know a person they called Bebe Cheramie?

A: Do I know Bebe Cheramie? I've heard of him, yeah.

Q: He said he rode to New Orleans with you on the Fox. His brother, and him, and you and your sister and your father. And you rode, and you rode...

A: So many, we used to take on anybody. We could, we could accomodate, I told you, thirty, and you always had a skiff, you see. So, 'cause you needed to land, you see. I could accomodate. You got to have one life preserver for each man you have. We used to have thirty life preservers, back then there. You know the rules of, of the...

Q: He said you would take the Fox as far as Harvey.

A: Well, I tell you, we used to go to Harvey. And in the river. Sometimes down the coast, where they were dredging. When they had dredging, uh, uh, you know, people used to work for. They worked for the State for a while, long before all these people ever thought about us years ago.

Q: When they built that cabin on the boat, when y'all changed the cabin on that boat...?

A: We didn't change the front part. Oh, coming down, wait, there's a pilot wheel right in the front, you can see it. You get all your clothes cut with, with all kinds of, there's lumber there. I don't know where the persons, they put it there. They'd do anything. But you could look inside there, at the pilot wheel. Like that.

Q: What about the wheelhouse?

A: Well, that was part of the wheelhouse. You could see all your people sitting down, the old man made pretty seats. Well, we had them made. He superintended. I got 'em. I got a many of them. I varnished them.

Q: Did Man Orgeron help build that?

A: Yeah, carry the lumber, they had, that's about all. Who told you, about Man Orgeron, he wasn't a cabinet maker. It took a good man. They're beautiful. They got, they all got, oh, pieces in the...

Q: What was the name of the man who made the boat?

A: I don't know that. Now, that I don't know.

Q: He was on Bayou St. John?

A: Around the Bayou. There were so many people that made boats. We bought a boat from a man on Louisiana Avenue. A speed boat. And it, we didn't have no place to put it. A nice one, too. That was a funny boat you'd like to see. But she had a square stern. But she had a bow like that. She was made, she was made of cypress. She's still there, part of it. You could see the stem, stuck out, by that of course, in addition to oars.

Q: Did you ever see any other boats down here that were pointed at both ends like that?

A: No. Not like that. I saw one come up here from, uhhh, well, New Orleans. That, what they call that, I can't think of that, and I been in New Orleans all my life.

Q: West End?

A: West End. You know, they used to, they filled all that in. It was all filled in with garbage. That's not like it was years ago. And they put dirt on top. After those buildings built. They didn't know what to do with all the mud. Now, I wish we could have got the money. The old man took a dredge, one of his own dredges, and he pumped that whole place in. That was a whole of alligators. Oh, they had big fifteen foot alligator in there. Now....

Q: We gotta go.

A: Well you go. You come back.

Q: We'll be back. We want to talk to you some more about that boat.

A: If you look inside the boat. It is all creosoted inside. At least all the ribs. We put heavy ribs. To tell you the truth, we used to carry a hell of a lot of iron. We wouldn't trust nobody. They broke some of the cars, because we didn't need those kind of cars. And, uh, he didn't want them anymore. Now, everybody's looking for old cars!

Q: Say, one more question, Mr. Aymar? Your father, uh, did...

A: I could show you a car you can't....

Q: Ask him what docks his father designed, any big docks his father designed?

(Galloway) Mr. Aymar, did your father design any docks or wharves around here, any big docks, a place to put a boat on the Bayou?

A: Well, no. Some of them, they may, they're old. They're great big beams going down, and they were tied. They are easy to make. We were going to build one out of shingles on our property, but our daughter let it out, to a, to a turtle man. This man likes to talk.

Q: We gotta go. We gotta get to work. We'll come back and see you. We're late. Maybe tomorrow. Thank you very much.

M/V Fox, Tape 005, Side B, Felix de Bloisblanc

Q: Do you remember Regal engines?

A: Yeah, I do remember the name some, but I don't remember what they look like.

Q: Great big ol' 2-cylinder guys. Had to jump start them with your foot. Didn't have a starter.

A: Lathrop, I remember Lathrops pretty well. But Regal, not so good.

Q: Who do you think made the Regals?

A: God, I don't know.

Q: How about the Fox, do you remember the Fox engines?

A: Not really, not really, I can't um... I had heard it, but I had, I really don't have any experience with it, don't remember it that well.

Q: Uh huh. You worked on 2-cylinder Lathrops, huh?

A: Yeah, I worked on 4-cylinder, too, Lathrops.

Q: Uh huh. 4-cylinders came in after the 2-cylinder jobs, huh?

A: Not necessarily, I think they came about the same time. There's just more horse.

Q: Yeah, OK. Do you remember the 2-cylinder Lathrops pretty well?

A: Pretty well, yeah.

Q: How did, uh, did those kick start, too?

A: Well not kick start. They used to, they used to just swing, they had an enormous flywheel, very heavy, you know.

Q: Yeah?

A: And they'd swing it over in position there, adjust step on one of the, on the spoke, you see? You'd step on the spoke, and that would come up the top... it was a two cycle job, you know?

Q: Yeah?

A: And it, uh, had a spark plug, and you'd start'm off on a squirt can full of gasoline. It had petcocks. They opened up the petcocks, there, and they would release the compression so much they'd be easy to turn over. And you'd "shhh" with a little

gasoline in the petcock, there, and she'd start, uh, she'd start running, you see. And then you'd switch it on over to the diesel.

Q: Uh huh.

A: It had big, wide rings there, about 5/8ths of an inch wide, and um, they were a remarkable engine. They didn't have too much power. They started off about 16 horsepower for a 2-cylinder job, and went on up to a little bigger size, a 24. But they would run from here to hell! You could hear them at Biloxi. The noise they made was unmistakable (imitates engine noises). When those, those schooners, they used to use schooners out of Biloxi, you see they'd trawl with the sail, they wouldn't trawl with the motor, just use the motor to get in and out with, you know?

Q: Uh huh?

A: And they'd block'm up to keep'm from turning over because, uh, you'd imagine, well, the force of water turning against the propeller, it would be less if they let it turn. But it didn't work that way. You'd block'm up with a piece of wood, you see?

Q: Yeah.

A: And, uh, keep'm from turning and they offer less resistance.

Q: Uh huh. How old are you Mr. de Bloisblanc?

A: I'm 81.

Q: 81? This boat that we're looking at ran from Bayou Lafourche up through the Harvey Canal No. 2, Harvey Canal No. 1 up to New Orleans. And it's sitting on the bank at Larose. It belonged to a gentleman named Ormand Aymar. Did you ever hear of him?

A: No.

Q: He bought the Regal engine from Alex Barker, over in Lockport, of Barker Barge Lines. You remember them?

A: No, I can't say I do.

Q: And I'm having one heck of a time pinning down that Regal engine. I've got the serial number off of it and everything, and I don't know who to contact, you know, to tell me about it. You got any ideas?

A: No, I haven't the faintest notion who would have a Regal or who keep one. We had a Lathrop around here. Belonged to a friend of mine for the longest kind of time, and finally just threw it away.

Q: Uh huh. This boat that it was in...

A: It was in good shape, too, practically brand new.

Q: There was a boat like the one that we're looking at down on Bayou Lafourche that had a 2-cylinder Lathrop in it. They had to hold it up with guy wires. Big engine sat in there, 2-cylinder engine. They had to have guy wires hold it up straight. Does that sound right to you?

A: No. It didn't need any guy wires. It had an ordinary base. It just laid in the engine bed, you know?

Q: Uh huh. This boat that we're looking at was built on Bayou St. John, sometime before the turn of the century. And it had a cat rig sail, but it also had these...first a Fox, and then a Regal engine in it. The boat's about 45 to 40 feet long, and it's pointed at both ends. It's all cypress. Do you remember when they were building those things up there at Bayou St. John?

A: Well they had a shipyard right there at Esplanade and the Bayou.

Q: Was that Dupuy's?

A: Dupuy, yeah.

Q: They tell me there was an Irishman up there that made boats, too.

A: An Irishman?

Q: Uh huh.

A: Well, but uh, the time when I knew Dupuy's shipyard they had ceased to make, they had ceased to build any boats around there. Uh, the man who was ranrod of the outfit wasn't around any more, and it just was in a caretaker situation.

Q: Uh huh.

A: With an old, uh, gentleman there, who Dupuy, I think he was a brother of the fellow that, uh, ran the yard one time. And he came back. He was a one-legged man, and he came back. And he built, uh, a pretty good-sized work boat, you know. Fishing boat, oh, must have been about 80 feet long... 75... 60 anyhow.

Q: Uh huh.

A: And he built one there, and that was about it because the bridge over at Esplanade Street fell down. Practically fell down in our faces one day. We were going through, and that son-of-a-bitch fell right in our faces.

Q: I'll be damned.

A: But we were about to go out with the boat, you see. So we had to

sink the boat, and pull it up, pull it underneath through the water, pull it underneath the bridge, and then, uh, pump it out on the other side to get out from outside the bridge.

Q: I'll be darned. This boat we're looking at is pointed at both ends. The people down the Bayou call it bateau pointu les deux bouts. Did you ever see any two-pointed boats out Bayou St. John, or out at the West End? In other words it didn't have a flat stern. It was pointed at both ends.

A: Yeah, I've seen boats like that.

Q: People are calling them Bayonne style. Does that mean anything to you?

A: A what?

Q: Bayonne style.

A: Bayonne style?

Q: Yeah.

A: Oh, I don't know.

Q: Never heard of that, huh?

A: No.

Q: These boats that were two-pointed that you saw out at the West End, uh, were they trawls or pleasure boats, or what?

A: Oh, mostly pleasure boats.

Q: How big do you think they were?

A: Oh, I'd say about 20, 30 feet. Something like that.

Q: They had a sail rig?

A: Some of them did, yeah.

Q: Some had both the rig, the sail and the motor?

A: Yeah, that's right.

Q: When was the last time you think you saw one like that?

A: I wouldn't know, really.

Q: Long time, huh?

A: A good while.

Q: Yeah, this boat's...

A: They were streamlined, those double-ended things, they were streamlined, and excellent for low powers. But when people started to put real horses in them, and expected to plane, they couldn't use boats like that. Those things wouldn't, wouldn't go anywhere.

Q: Yeah.

A: They had to have a straight line.

Q: Yeah. Were you in the engine business here in New Orleans for a long time?

A: Yeah, a pretty good while. Still am.

Q: Still are?

A: Got an engine right now.

Q: No kidding?

A: Doing the machine work, and stuff like that on it.

Q: What's the name of your business?

A: Motor Clinic.

Q: Motor Clinic. I'll be damned. And you're 81, and still running your own business, huh?

A: Well no, uh, my son technically owns the business, but he lets me hang around here and do a few things.

Q: Uh huh. Take advantage of your experience, huh?

A: Do what?

Q: Take advantage of your experience, huh?

A: Well, not necessarily take advantage, but you got to do something with the time, and if you do it good enough you just as well be useful, right?

Q: Yeah. So you've known old Leonard Connett for a long time, huh?

A: Oh yeah, shucks. Leonard, uh, Leonard helped to marry me.

Q: No kidding?

A: Yeah, about fifty years ago.

Q: And you forgave him, right?

A: Yeah. It was a nice deal...

Q: Good, good. All right. You got any other ideas on where I might go or who I might call about these old Regal engines?

A: No.

Q: You know, if I could figure out who made it, I'd contact the manufacturer; right'm a letter, and see what we could find out about it.

A: Uh huh. No, I really don't. Maybe around some of these boat yards they might have some old codgers that would know something.

Q: Yeah. Well, we'll check it. You know, I got a wide net out, we're casting.

A: Uh huh.

Q: I sure appreciate your help. Can you think of anything else that might help me?

A: No. Now, what's you want to do?

Q: We're writing the history of this boat.

A: Oh, you're writing a history of it.

Q: Yeah. It was the first boat that ran that canal down there.

A: Uh huh. Did it make a regular run, for freight? Before the road was built, you know, that's the only way they had.

Q: Yeah, it took passengers mostly. It ran from Bayou Lafourche to Charity Hospital. Whenever anybody got sick, that's the only way they could get there.

A: Bayou Lafourche to Charity Hospital?

Q: Yeah. It came all the way up through the locks, through the canals, and uh, up to the river. Name of the boat was the Fox. You ever hear of it?

A: The Fox! Let's see. It seems to me there was a boat named the Fox that travelled the Mississippi River.

Q: It was owned by Ormand Aymar.

A: Fox? No, escapes me.

Q: It was, uh, it was about 40 feet long, 45 feet long, all cypress. And it had a cat rig sail, but it also had this 2-

cylinder, first a Fox engine and then Regal engine.

A: Uh huh. Yeah, pal, I don't remember.

Q: OK. I sure appreciate your help, Mr. de Bloisblanc. It's been a joy talking with you. I hope you have a mighty fine day.

END

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